



February 10, 2017

**TIP OF THE WEEK:** If you received an invoice deadline extension for FY2015 recurring services, submit your invoices for these services on or before February 27, 2017 (see below). You MUST complete your invoicing for these services by that date.

## Commitments for Funding Year 2016

**Funding Year 2016.** USAC is scheduled to release Funding Year (FY) 2016 Wave 34 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on February 15. This wave includes commitments for approved applications for all service types and at all discount levels. As of February 10, FY2016 commitments total over \$2.15 billion.

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).

## FY2017 Application Window Filing Tips and Reminders

The FCC Form 471 application filing window for FY2017 will open later this month. Take note of the important dates and reminders below as you plan to apply for discounts on eligible services for FY2017.

**Window opens:** Monday, February 27, 2017 at noon EST.

**Window closes:** Thursday, May 11, 2017 at 11:59 PM EDT.

**Last day to timely file an FCC Form 470:** Thursday, April 13, 2017 at 11:59 PM EDT.

Your program forms must be filed in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC). The dates and times above apply to the time the form is certified in EPC. If you complete all of the required information on the form before the deadline but certify it after the deadline, it will not be considered as timely filed.

**NOTE:** The FY2016 FCC Form 471 is still available online in EPC. **Do not file an FCC Form 471 in EPC before the FY2017 filing window opens – you will not be filing an in-window FY2017 form, but rather an out-of-window FY2016 form that will not apply to FY2017.**

You can start now to update your profile information, your contract records, and your connectivity questions so that you are prepared for the FY2017 filing window.

### Profile information updates

Applicants should update their profile information first. **The deadline to update profile information is February 26, 2017 at 11:59 PM EST.** With all applicant profile information updated in the system before the window opens, schools, libraries, and consortia will all be able to file applications within the same window.

To update the profile for an entity, go to that entity's organization page in EPC (the page with that entity's name at the top) and click "Manage Organization," either from the button near the top of the page or from the Related Actions menu on the left-hand side of the page.

- For schools and school districts, the data to review and update includes address and contact information, attributes (e.g., public, private, tribal), and student counts (full-time, part-time, and peak part-time student counts; approved CEP percentage, alternative discount mechanisms) – basically, any of the fields that appear on the profile page of an individual school that is part of your school district or an independent school.
- For libraries and library systems, the data to review and update includes address and contact information, attributes (e.g., public, private, tribal), the main library branch and its associated school district, and square footage – basically, any of the fields that appear on the profile page of a library branch that is part of your library system or an independent library.
- For consortia, review your address and contact information and your list of member entities. You can add or delete entities as appropriate so that your list is correct and complete.

After February 26, if you find that you have missed a necessary entity update, you can:

- include the appropriate information in one of the narrative fields on the FCC Form 471 before you certify it or
- submit a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) modification by accessing the form in EPC and choosing "Submit Modification Request (RAL)" from the "Related Actions" option in the left-hand menu.

### Contract updates

If you intend to cite a new or existing contract on your FCC Form 471, you must have a contract record for that contract in your profile. A contract record provides specific details about a contract – e.g., the establishing FCC Form 470, the number of bids received, the service provider, the contract term and associated dates – so that this information can be populated from your profile to the appropriate funding request on your FCC Form 471. **Contract records are not subject to the February 26 update deadline.**

To create a contract record, go to the organization page for the parent organization (independent school, school district, independent library, library system, or consortium), click "Contracts" on the left-hand menu, then click the "Manage Contracts" button, then click the green "Add a New Contract" button.

- You do not need to create a new contract record for a multi-year contract or a contract with voluntary extensions if you created the contract record in FY2016.
  - For a contract that has been voluntarily extended through FY2017, you can cite the existing contract record on the appropriate funding request and then enter the extended date in the field labeled "What is the date your contract expires for the current term of the contract?"
- You do need to create a contract record for a new contract. You will also need to create a new contract record if you need to make changes to an existing record, because the system does not allow edits after a record has been submitted.
- You are encouraged – but not required – to upload a copy of your contract into your contract record. If you do not upload your contract, be sure to keep a copy handy in case USAC requests it during the review of your application.

You will be able to start an FCC Form 471 that features contracted services if you do not have contract records in your profile, but you will not be able to complete the data entry for a funding request for those contracted services until those contract records have been created and submitted.

### Connectivity question updates

Each entity featured on an application must include information about the sufficiency and speed of its Internet access, wide area network connections, and internal connections (Wi-Fi). **Connectivity question answers are not subject to the February 26 update deadline.**

To answer the connectivity questions, go to the organization page for the parent organization (independent school, school district, independent library, or library system), click "Related Actions" on the left-hand menu, then click "Manage Connectivity Questions."

- A school district provides upload and download speeds if it aggregates Internet access for the entire district. For its individual schools, it provides upload and download speeds, type(s) of connections, sufficiency of Wi-Fi, and the primary barrier – if any – to having a robust internal

network.

- A library system provides upload and download speeds if it aggregates Internet access for the entire system. For its library branches, it provides upload and download speeds, type(s) of connections, sufficiency of Wi-Fi, and the primary barrier – if any – to having a robust internal network.
- An independent school or independent library provides upload and download speeds, type(s) of connections, sufficiency of Wi-Fi, and the primary barrier – if any – to having a robust internal network.
- Consortia are not required to answer connectivity questions for their members.

You will be able to start an FCC Form 471 if you have not answered the appropriate connectivity questions, but you will not be able to move to the certification section of your form until those questions have been answered in your profile. If you answered the connectivity questions for FY2016, you should review the answers you already entered in your profile to make sure they are still correct.

### **Invoice Deadline Reminder for FY2015 Recurring Services: February 27, 2017**

Applicants and service providers who requested and received their one-time invoice deadline extension for FY2015 recurring services must submit their invoices on or before **February 27, 2017**. USAC cannot grant a second invoice deadline extension.

Before USAC can pay an invoice:

- USAC must have issued **an FCDL with a positive funding commitment** for the funding request.
- The applicant must have **certified an FCC Form 486**, Receipt of Service Confirmation and Children's Internet Protection Act Certification Form, for the funding request.
- If the billed entity has paid for the service in full and intends to file an FCC Form 472, Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form, the billed entity must first certify – and USAC must approve – **an FCC Form 498**, Service Provider and Billed Entity Identification Number and General Contact Information Form.
- The service provider must have **certified an FCC Form 473**, Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form, for the funding year.
  - **NOTE:** If your service provider has not filed the SPAC Form as the invoice deadline approaches, go ahead and file the BEAR Form. You may encounter a warning message (e.g., the service provider has not yet filed a SPAC Form), but you should **proceed and submit the invoice**. Remember that USAC considers an invoice submitted on the day it is filed, regardless of whether the service provider has completed its certifications.
- If the billed entity intends to certify a BEAR Form, the authorized person for that billed entity must have a Personal Identification Number (**PIN**).

Applicants and service providers are strongly encouraged to get their invoicing process completed as soon as possible.

- For program questions, general form questions, and to request a PIN, call our Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 888-203-8100 on weekdays between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM EST.
- For questions about an FCC Form 498 that you have already submitted, call USAC Customer Service at 888-641-8722 (choose option 5, then option 1) on weekdays between the hours of 9:30 AM and 4:30 PM EST.

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