



May 5, 2017

TIP OF THE WEEK: You have less than one week to certify your FCC Form 471 in EPC for FY2017. May 11, 2017 is the last possible day to certify an FCC Form 471 within the filing window.

Commitments for Funding Year 2016

Funding Year 2016. USAC is scheduled to release Funding Year (FY) 2016 Wave 46 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on May 9. This wave includes commitments for approved applications for all service types and at all discount levels. As of May 5, FY2016 commitments total over \$2.59 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).

CSB Hours During the Last Week of the Filing Window

The Client Service Bureau (CSB) will be open additional hours starting this evening and running through the close of the filing window to assist applicants with any issues they may encounter. We strongly encourage you to call as soon as you know that you need our help.

You can reach CSB at **888-203-8100**.

| Date | CSB Open | CSB Close |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Friday, May 5 | 8:00 AM EDT | 10:00 PM EDT |
| Saturday, May 6 | 9:00 AM EDT | 6:00 PM EDT |
| Sunday, May 7 | 9:00 AM EDT | 6:00 PM EDT |
| Monday, May 8 | 8:00 AM EDT | 10:00 PM EDT |
| Tuesday, May 9 | 8:00 AM EDT | 10:00 PM EDT |
| Wednesday, May 10 | 8:00 AM EDT | 10:00 PM EDT |
| Thursday, May 11 | 8:00 AM EDT | 12:30 AM EDT (May 12) |

Generally, CSB has the highest call volumes during the following hours:

- Weekday mornings from 11:00 AM through 12:00 PM EDT
- Weekday afternoons from 2:30 PM through 3:30 PM EDT.

If you call during these hours and an agent is not able to answer, please use our callback service. You will be offered the option to leave your telephone number, and we will then return your call at our earliest convenience.

Tips for Last-minute Filers

For those applicants who have not yet completed their competitive bidding processes or who have not yet filed an FCC Form 471, we are providing the following tips:

1. First, make sure that you will be able to work on an FCC Form 471.

If you can't log in to EPC, talk to your account administrator. They must have created you as a user with full or partial rights (permissions) and you must have created a password, logged in with your password, and accepted the terms and conditions for EPC use. You can watch the [Logging In](#) instructional video to view the entire process.

If you can log in to EPC, click the **FCC Form 471** link at the top of your organization's landing page to verify your access.

- If you don't have access to the form (if the link does not appear or you cannot use it to navigate to the form), check with your account administrator to verify your rights. You must be a partial-rights user on an FCC Form 471 to enter information on the form, and you must be a full-rights user on an FCC Form 471 to certify the form. Your account administrator can update your rights.
- If you have access to the form but cannot enter data or take other actions, call our Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 888-203-8100 so they can investigate.

2. Start your FCC Form 471, even if you are not ready to provide funding request details.

Log in to EPC and click **FCC Form 471** from the quick links at the top of your landing page. At this point, all you need to decide is the nickname you will give to your form and who will serve as your contact person.

Starting your form now gives you the following advantages:

- You will have started the process and have somewhere to return to. The system will create a task in your **My Tasks** list on your landing page after you start a form, and you can accept that task and continue your work later.
- You can review the information for your organization and for any related entities (schools in your school district, libraries in your library system) without doing any data entry or providing any other information.
 - Review your organization's information (e.g., name, address, telephone number, attributes) and note any necessary corrections.
 - Review your related entities' information (e.g., name, address, urban/rural status, attributes, student counts for schools, library square footage and library main branch designation for libraries) and note any necessary corrections.
 - Because entity profiles are locked, you will not be able to make any changes at this point. However, by making a note of your desired updates now, you will be ready to submit a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) modification to inform us of those updates right after you certify your form. See the [March 31 SL News Brief](#) for information on RAL modifications.

3. Wait the full 28 days, even if you certified your FCC Form 470 after April 13.

You are required to wait at least 28 days after your FCC Form 470 is posted to the USAC website (i.e., certified in EPC) before you choose a service provider, sign a contract (if applicable), and certify your FCC Form 471. Waiting less than 28 days is a competitive bidding violation, which could lead to denial of your funding.

If you certified your FCC Form 470 after April 13 (or made a cardinal change after April 13 to the scope of services you are requesting), wait the required 28 days before you complete the above activities. When you certify your FCC Form 471, you will receive an out-of-window message. You can then submit a request for a waiver of the application window deadline with the FCC. See the [July 29, 2016 SL News Brief](#) for information on submitting waiver requests.

4. Review the answers to your connectivity questions, even if you answered them last year.

Independent schools, independent libraries, school districts, and library systems must answer specific questions about the sufficiency and speed of their internet access, wide area network connections, and internal connections (Wi-Fi). These questions appear in your organization's profile, and can be answered or updated even though EPC profiles are currently locked.

You can provide or review your answers independently from the FCC Form 471. Then, the answers to the connectivity questions will be automatically uploaded to your FCC Form 471 right before you reach the certification page.

To answer or update your answers to 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**. See the [February 10 SL News Brief](#) for more information on answering connectivity questions.

5. Create a contract record for each new contract or legally binding agreement, if you are ready to do so.

You must have a contract record in your profile for each contract or legally binding agreement you intend to cite on your FY2017 FCC Form 471. You then cite the contract record for each funding request for services that will be provided under that contract when you create the funding request on your form.

- If you created a contract record last year for a multi-year contract, you can cite that contract record this year.
- If you created a contract record last year for a contract with voluntary extensions, you do not need to create a new contract record if your extension covers services for FY2017. First, work with your service provider to exercise the extension for your FY2017 services. Then, when you cite that contract record on a funding request, enter the last date of service for FY2017 in the appropriate field on the funding request. You do not have to create a new contract record simply because you exercised your option to extend the contract.

See the [February 10 SL News Brief](#) for more information on creating contract records.

6. Ask CSB to create missing entities for you and, if possible, attach them to your organization.

CSB can create related entities (schools for school districts and libraries for library systems) for you if they are missing from your profile. If adding those entities will not affect discount calculations or cause other system problems, CSB can link those entities to your organization. However, if they will have a downstream effect and CSB cannot link the entities, you can submit a RAL modification and USAC can add them to your organization during Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review.

Here are some reasons we may be unable to link entities to your organization at this point:

- Adding an individual school to a school district can change the discount for the school district (both because of a change in student counts and for the urban/rural status calculation), for the independent library or library system whose main branch is located in that school district, and/or for a consortium that has featured that school district or library system as a member.
- Adding a library branch to a library system can change the discount for the library system (for the urban/rural status calculation) and/or for a consortium that has featured that library system as a member.
- We may be unable to change the parent or child status of an entity because that entity may have filed an FCC Form 470 or FCC Form 471 for FY2016 or FY2017 under the other status. (A parent entity is a school district or a library system; a child entity is a school in a school district or a library branch in a library system.)

If CSB cannot make a change for you, certify your FCC Form 471 without the change and then submit a RAL modification to notify us of the correct information. You can also add the correct information to the narrative section of one of the funding requests on your form.

7. Create a customer service case in EPC to provide us with detailed information or if you want a written response to your question.

While we encourage you to call CSB to discuss your questions and issues, in some cases you may prefer to open a customer service case. CSB can work customer service cases when call volumes are lighter and still be able to respond within a reasonable timeframe.

Here are some specific reasons that you may prefer to open a customer service case:

- **Entity creation.** For instances when you need more than three entities created, it is easier for CSB to work from a spreadsheet rather than from information provided during a live call. For entity creation, we strongly encourage you to provide the entity details in written form, such as a spreadsheet, for requests for more than three entities. You can find the details we need under the **Creating Entity Numbers** heading on the [Entity Numbers](#) web page.
- **Written response.** We can provide a response in writing as an entry in a customer service case.
- **Attached document.** If you want to provide a document for our reference – for example, a copy

of a letter or email you received from USAC that you have a question about – you can attach the document directly to a customer service case, making it easier for us to provide an accurate answer.

8. Use the "interim SPIN" if USAC has not yet issued a SPIN to your chosen service provider.

USAC issues a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) to each service provider who successfully certifies an FCC Form 498, Service Provider and Billed Entity Identification Number and General Contact Information Form. Applicants then enter this nine-digit number in the appropriate field in a contract record or, for services provided under tariff or a month-to-month arrangement without a contract, directly in the FCC Form 471 funding request.

If your service provider is new to the E-rate program and does not have a SPIN – or you are not sure which SPIN to use – you can still certify your FCC Form 471. Use the interim SPIN 143666666, a SPIN that USAC created for this purpose, as a placeholder so that you can continue entering data in your form.

Once you have the correct SPIN, you can inform USAC by submitting a RAL modification. You can also give the SPIN to your PIA reviewer during the review of your application.

9. Take advantage of CSB's extended hours.

We generally get fewer calls during the extended hours noted above – especially the hours on Saturday, Sunday, and after 8:00 PM on weekdays. Do take advantage of these additional times if you can.

10. Do not wait until the last minute to contact us with questions or issues.

If you follow the tips above and identify any issues you have right away, you should be able to complete the remainder of your form without our assistance. As always, the sooner you notify us, the sooner we can help you resolve your issue.

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