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# Schools and Libraries Program News Brief

SPECIAL EDITION

December 21, 2018

## E-rate Funding Year 2019 Application Filing Window Opens January 16, 2019

Dear E-rate Participant:

I am pleased to announce the Funding Year (FY) 2019 FCC Form 471 application filing window will open on Wednesday, January 16, 2019, at 12:00 noon EST and will close on Wednesday, March 27, 2019, at 11:59 p.m. EDT.

Applicants can begin preparing now for the successful filing of their FY2019 funding applications by taking the following steps:

- **Install Browser Updates:** Google Chrome is the recommended browser for the [E-rate Productivity Center \(EPC\)](#), but no matter which browser you use, be sure the latest version is installed on your computer.
- **Establish Account and User Rights:** If this is your first year participating in the E-rate Program, call our Client Service Bureau at 888-203-8100 to create your account in EPC. If you already have an EPC account, log in and review, update and/or assign user rights for persons who will need access for FY2019.
- **Update Your EPC Profile Now:** To ensure a smoother filing process, **EPC profiles will lock on January 15, 2019, at 11:59 p.m. EST.** You will not be able to make changes to your EPC profile after that date. So, please log in to your EPC account now to make any necessary changes to your profile. The [December 7 SL News Brief](#) includes important reminders for updating your profile.
- **Proceed With Competitive Bidding:** If you have not started the [competitive bidding process](#) by [filing your FCC Form 470](#), please begin now. Remember that you must wait **28 days** after filing the FCC Form 470 before entering into an agreement and filing your application. For FY2019, you must certify your FCC Form 470 on or before February 27 to wait 28 days and then certify your FCC Form 471 before the window closes.

As always, we are here to help. Contact our Client Service Bureau at 888-203-8100 for assistance or open a customer service case in EPC.

This will be the 21st E-rate Program application filing window, and through the years we have worked together to improve the E-rate experience in the following ways:

### **Funding decisions**

In FY2018, we received 35,000 applications for a total of \$2.77 billion. Within 30 days of the window closing, USAC issued the first FY2018 funding commitment wave, which included 15,000 applications – 43% of the applications that were filed in the window – and over \$503 million in funding requests. By the beginning of June, we had committed \$1 billion on 18,000 applications. With your help, we continued to issue commitments at an accelerated pace through the summer and issued Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) to 98% of the workable applications by the end of September.

We are dedicated to continuing to review applications and issue commitments efficiently in FY2019.

### **Implementing program participant suggestions**

In 2018, we requested your suggestions to improve our E-rate information technology systems and program participant trainings. We made a number of improvements in our online systems, and we used your feedback to redesign our FCDLs to make them more accessible and easier to read.

Also based on your feedback, we developed participant training for all experience levels, including beginner level webinars, a half-day beginner session preceding each of our in-person training events, and beginner and advanced learning tracks as part of our full-day training events.

### **Creating online training**

Today, we are launching the first of a [new online training series](#) which provides an online learning option for those program participants who were unable to attend our fall training events or who want a refresher. We encourage you to view the offerings in this series and let us know what you think. Please continue to share your feedback through our in-person trainings, our webinars, and our [Share Your E-rate Technical System Ideas](#) page to help us continue to improve the program.

### **New business process vendor**

As we look toward 2019, we are committed to strengthening the E-rate experience for participants. As many of you know, USAC is transitioning to a new vendor to support E-rate business process operations. All review activities, including program integrity assurance (PIA), appeals, funding commitment waves and payments, will continue during the transition. We appreciate your cooperation during this time and will continue to provide any information and updates as necessary.

As this year draws to a close, I'm grateful for all of the people who make E-rate a reality for students and library patrons across the country. Whether you are an applicant, a service provider, a consultant, or a state coordinator, your work matters in the lives of students and community members, allowing them to learn, grow, and thrive in an ever-evolving digital world. I look forward to continuing to work together, and you have my full commitment that USAC will administer the E-rate Program in a way that benefits from your participation and feedback.

Sincerely,

Catriona Ayer  
Acting Vice President, Schools and Libraries Division

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