Schools and Libraries (E-Rate)

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12/17/2010 – FCC Updates DA 10-2355 & 10-2356
On Wednesday, December 15, 2010, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released DA 10-2355 clarifying the eligibility of basic maintenance and the new E-rate program gift rules adopted in the Sixth Report and Order. On this same date, the Bureau also released a public notice, DA 10-2356, providing further guidance to E-rate program participants, listing effective dates of the proposals adopted in the Sixth Report and Order and answering frequently asked questions (FAQs).

12/15/2010 – E-rate Deployed Ubiquitously (EDU) 2011 Pilot Program applicants
Note that the FCC's website will be down starting at 6pm EST this Friday, December 17, 2010; therefore your applications must be sent to reach their site by that time in order to be considered as filed by the deadline. The FCC's website and related electronic filing systems and documents (except for NORS) will be unavailable beginning 6:00 pm EST Friday, December 17 through 6:00 am EST Monday, December 20 for scheduled maintenance.

12/10/2010 – FY2011 Application Filing Window Dates Established
The FY2011 Form 471 application filing window will open at noon EST on Tuesday, January 11, 2011 and close at 11:59 pm EDT on Thursday, March 24, 2011. The window will be open for 73 days. Review the December 9, 2010 Special Edition Schools and Libraries News Brief for important guidance for FY2011 applications.

11/22/2010 – Revised FCC Forms 470 and 471 and their accompanying instructions have been approved for use by OMB
On Friday, November 19, 2010, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released Public Notice 10-2218 announcing that revised FCC Forms 470 and 471 and their accompanying instructions have been approved for use by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
The forms and instructions will be available for actual submission by E-rate participants after being posted on USAC's website by January 11, 2011, before the opening of the 2011 application filing window. Applicants should NOT submit the new forms until they are posted on USAC's website.
Also, the FCC Form 471 now requires that the Item 21 attachment be submitted with the form.
The forms and instructions as approved by the OMB are available on the FCC website for your review.

> Form 470
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> Form 470 Instructions
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> Form 471
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> Form 471 Instructions

USAC provided additional guidance for FY2011 Form 470 online filers in the November 19, 2010 issue of the Schools and Libraries News Brief.

11/8/2010 – FY 2011 Eligible Services List
FY 2011 Eligible Services List

11/8/2010 – FCC Order for Modernizing the E-Rate Program Erratum
6th Report and Order
6th Report and Order Erratum

11/8/2010 – FY 2011 Eligible Services List
FY 2011 Eligible Services List

11/8/2010 – FCC Public Notice E-rate Wireless Pilot Program
View FCC Public Notice (EDU 2011)

10/25/2010 – Update on FY2011 Form 471 Application Filing Window
The opening and closing dates for the FY2011 filing window have not yet been established. However, for planning purposes, we would like to share the following information:

> We expect the FY2011 filing window to open in early January 2011.

The window will remain open for about the same number of days as in the past, which means that we expect the window to close in mid-March 2011.

We will provide updates as more information becomes available. When the exact window opening and closing dates have been established, we will send out our annual Letter to the Field with these dates and other information helpful for applicants filing Forms 470 and 471 for FY2011.
The forms and instructions as approved by the OMB are available on the FCC website for your review.

Form 470

Form 470 Instructions

Form 471

Form 471 Instructions

USAC provided additional guidance for FY2011 Form 470 online filers in the November 19, 2010 issue of the Schools and Libraries News Brief.

9/29/2010 – 2010 Fall Applicant Training Presentations are Available
Fall Applicant Training Presentations

9/29/2010 – FCC Order for Modernizing the E-Rate Program
FCC Order for Modernizing the E-Rate Program

9/29/2010 – Service Providers – join USAC for a Service Provider Training that will address the new FCC Order. Register Today!
Register Today!

9/27/2010 – Webinar for Telecommunications and Internet Service Providers on October 5, 6, or 7 – How to File and Submit Changes Using FCC Form 498
Register Today!

9/23/2010 – FCC Enables High-Speed, Affordable Broadband for Schools and Libraries
The Federal Communications Commission today upgraded and modernized the E-rate program to bring fast, affordable Internet access to schools and libraries across the country. These changes will help ensure that America's students can learn and develop the hightech skills necessary to compete in the 21st Century economy. The National Broadband Plan laid out a series of recommendations to promote broadbandenabled, cutting-edge learning inside and outside the classroom. One of the key recommendations is modernizing the FCC's E-rate program, established by Congress to bring connectivity to all schools and libraries across America. The program has achieved remarkable success – 97 percent of American schools and nearly all public libraries now have basic Internet access. Read more: FCC News Release

9/17/2010 – Registration for Fall Applicant Training Sessions Has Closed
As of now, all sessions for the fall 2010 applicant training are full and all registrations are closed. If you have registered for more than one city, please choose which city you plan to attend so that you are not taking up two spaces and others may attend. Unfortunately, unless we receive cancellations, we will not be accepting any more people from the waiting lists. As a reminder, all of the presentation materials will be posted on the website by September 28 so that you can download them. If you are attending a training session, please remember to bring copies of the presentations with you. If you still have questions about a training session or wish to cancel your registration, you can email USAC.

8/11/2010 – USAC Launches its Payment Quality Assurance (PQA) Program
In August 2010, USAC rolled out its Payment Quality Assurance (PQA) Program. The PQA Program enables USAC to provide accurate, timely information about improper payments to the FCC, as required by the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPIA). Under this program, USAC assesses specific payments made to beneficiaries in all four USF programs (Schools and Libraries, High Cost, Low Income, and Rural Health Care) to determine if these payments were made in accordance with program rules. Using results of these assessments, USAC calculates estimates of improper payment rates across entire USF programs and provides this information to the FCC.
For more information about the PQA Program and to obtain specific PQA document requirements, please click here. For a list of FAQs that provide information about the program, what to do if you are selected, and how/when to submit documents, click here.

8/10/2010 – Update your Form 498 with electronic banking information to ensure continued timely USF disbursements!
REMINDER! **Beginning August 31, USAC will withhold support payments to any entity that has not provided electronic banking information.** If your company does not have electronic banking information on its FCC Form 498 for each of the programs in which it participates, you may not receive your USF disbursements! Banking information must be received in advance of August 31st, so make Form 498 updates using USAC's E-File System right away!
Note: E-File updates your information immediately, while paper forms take longer to process. Forms mailed too close to August 31st may not be processed by the deadline. USAC suggests using E-File.
USAC encourages all applicants to verify with their Service Providers that the necessary information has been provided to USAC to ensure prompt payment. USAC also encourages Service Providers who have provided banking information in the past to log onto E-file regularly to confirm that information is accurate and up to date.
On June 2, 2010 the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau announced that all federal Universal Service Fund (USF) support payments must be made by electronic funds transfer starting August 31 (See Public NoticeDA 10-270). If you have any questions, or need help logging in to E-File, please contact USAC Customer Operations at **(888) 641-8722** or **customersupport@usac.org.**

7/16/2010 – FCC Seeks Comment on Revisions to FCC Forms 470 and 471
The FCC has released Public Notice DA 10-1248, seeking comment on proposed changes to the Form 470 and Form 471.
Proposed changes include:

eliminating questions that are no longer useful;

limiting data collection to information that is not already available through other USAC forms or review processes;

requiring information about the current number of broadband connections and their speeds;

requiring the Item 21 attachment to be filed within the filing window;

gathering specific information about the type of entity filling out the forms and/or applying for E-rate funding; and

updating to reflect changes in program rules and citations.

The FCC is seeking comment on all of the proposed changes to the forms and on whether the requirement to file the Item 21 attachment within the filing window should be implemented in FY2011 or in a future funding year.
Here are links to the draft forms and instructions:

Form 470

Form 470 Instructions

Form 471

Form 471 Instructions

Interested parties may file **comments on or before July 30, 2010.** For more information and instructions on how to file comments, refer to the Public Notice.

6/16/2010 – Comment Periods Established for Two FCC NPRMs and Draft FY2011 ESL

The FCC has released Public Notice DA 10-1045, announcing the comment deadlines for the E-rate Broadband Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) (FCC 10-83) released May 20, 2010 and the Eligible Services List (ESL) Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) (FCC 09-105) released December 2, 2009. The E-rate Broadband NPRM and the ESL Order and FNPRM were published in the Federal Register on June 9, 2010.

The FCC also seeks comment on the draft FY2011 ESL proposed by USAC. Many of the proposed changes for the draft FY2011 ESL are based on proposals in the ESL Order and FNPRM and the E-rate Broadband NPRM.

For both notices of proposed rulemaking and the draft ESL, interested parties may file comments on or before July 9, 2010, and reply comments on or before July 26, 2010. For more information and instructions on how to file comments, you can refer to the Public Notice.

6/3/2010 – FCC Issues an Order and a Public Notice of Interest to Service Providers

On June 2, the FCC issued an order and a public notice of particular interest to service providers:

Order DA 10-999 addresses issues related to the USAC E-rate invoicing process and clarifies that an electronic funds transfer mechanism to distribute universal service support payments invoiced by service providers does not conflict with the Commission's directive that service providers must remit the E-rate discount amount to the applicant "prior to tendering or making use of the payment from the Administrator."

Public Notice DA 10-270 establishes the effective date of August 31, 2010 for the electronic disbursement requirement to facilitate the processing of the electronic funds transfer (EFT) announced by the Wireline Competition Bureau in September 2009. After August 31, 2010, if a recipient of universal service support payments fails to provide the required financial institution information on its FCC Form 498 to enable payment by EFT, USAC will not make universal service support payments to that entity until the entity provides the required information.

4/7/2010 – Item 21 Attachments

If you have not certified your Form 471 or submitted your item 21 attachment please do so as soon as possible. USAC cannot process your Form 471 without the certification and Item 21 attachment(s). In other words, never in then never out.

3/12/2010 – USAC Provides Demand Estimate for Funding Year 2010 to FCC

On March 10, 2010, the Schools and Libraries Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) reported to the Federal Communications Commission that $3.92 billion in requested funding has been estimated for schools and libraries seeking discounts for Funding Year 2010. This estimate is based on the dollars requested in 42,713 applications received or postmarked by February 19, 2010, the close of the Form 471 application filing window.
There are several factors that will reduce ultimately the funds requested from the estimated level. First, while efforts have been made to eliminate duplicate requests, inevitably we will discover more duplication as we process these applications. Second, USAC's efforts to assure that funds are committed only for eligible services, for use by eligible entities with the appropriate discount rate, and are otherwise consistent with program rules, will further reduce the demand.
For detailed information, please refer to the FY2010 Demand Estimate.

3/5/2010 – RAL Corrections

If you do not have any corrections to your Form 471, DO NOT submit a copy of your RAL to USAC. If you do have corrections to report, be sure to clearly identify your corrections, sign your RAL, provide your contact information, and submit your corrections in a timely manner following the instructions in the RAL.

2/22/2010 – FCC Gives School E-rate Programs More Flexibility to Allow Community Use of Broadband Services (2/22/10)

In an order and notice of proposed rulemaking released February 19, 2010 (FCC 10-33) the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) waives rules that currently discourage public use of resources funded under the E-rate program through FY2010, which ends June 30, 2011. In the notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), the FCC seeks comment on revising its rules to make the change permanent. Comment and reply comment dates will be set upon publishment of the NPRM in the Federal Register. This change will leverage universal service funding to serve a larger population at no increased cost to the E-rate program. The general public will be able to use the Internet access already present in schools - at the schools' discretion - for purposes such as job searches and applications, digital literacy programs, and online access to governmental services and resources.

2/20/2010 – FY2010 Filing Window Closed (2/20/10)

The FY2010 filing window has closed. If you have not certified your Form 471 or submitted your item 21 attachment please do so as soon as possible. USAC cannot process your Form 471 without the certification and Item 21 attachment(s). In other words, never in then never out.

2/9/2010 – FY2010 Filing Window Close Extended to February 19, 2010 (2/9/10)

Due to adverse weather conditions in many areas of the country that may have prevented applicants from filing their FY2010 E-rate applications by the close of the window, USAC - in consultation with the FCC - has extended the close of the filing window to FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2010 AT 11:59

pm EST.

All FCC Forms 471 electronically filed or postmarked by that date and time will be considered IN WINDOW.

2/5/2010 – FILING Form 471 ONLINE: When can I reach the Client Service Bureau to get help?
The Client Service Bureau (CSB) is normally open on business days from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm ET. However, CSB is open extended hours during the last week of the window. We encourage you to call 1-888-203-8100 or send questions through Submit a Question this weekend when there are fewer requests:
Saturday, February 6: 9:00 am - 6:00 pm EST
Sunday, February 7: 9:00 am - 6:00 pm EST
Thursday, February 11: 8:00 am - 11:59 pm EST
REMINDER: If you have not already done so, take a minute to certify your Form 470. You can use the "Certify Complete" button on the Apply Online page to finish this important step.

2/4/2010 – FILING FORM 471 ONLINE: What should I do if I have a problem filing online?
Many common problems can be solved by reviewing the Tips and Troubleshooting document posted on the USAC website. If you still need assistance, you can contact the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 1-888-203-8100 or send them your question using Submit a Question.

REMINDER: If you can't enter your school district or library system BEN in a Block 4 worksheet, you should contact CSB to obtain a BEN for the district or system administration building where you intend to get the service. BENs that identify the district or system generically in Block 1 may not work in Block 4.

2/3/2010 – FILING FORM 471 ONLINE: How do I complete my form online if I exited before I finished it?
You will need your application number and security code to return to and complete your form.

   If you started your form using the Form 471 Interview button, click on that button.

   If you started your form using the Create Form 471 button, click on the Continue Incomplete button.
REMINDER: Your form has not been submitted online until you click on the green Submit button.

2/2/2010 – FILING FORM 471 ONLINE: Why do I need to keep my security code?
You will need your security code to complete your form if you time out of the system or your online filing is interrupted. You also use the security code to file your Item 21 attachment online and to reference an original view of your form online. USAC cannot retrieve your code for you if you lose it.

REMINDER: If your session times out, you can go back to the Apply Online page to continue your form.

2/1/2010 – FILING FORM 471 ONLINE: Can I submit my form and then sign my contract?
No. You must complete the following steps in this order:

 1. Wait your required 28 days.

 2. NEXT close your competitive bidding process, evaluate bids received, and select your service provider.

 3. NEXT sign and date your contract. (Contracts are not required for tariffed or month-to-month service.)

 4. NEXT complete, submit, and certify your Form 471.

More information
REMINDER: When you file a form online, write down your application number and security code or print the page that appears after you complete Block 1 of the form

1/29/2010 – COMPETITIVE BIDDING: Which documents should I save?
You should retain copies of all documents for five years after the last date to receive services. For competitive bidding, you should at a minimum keep copies of your Form(s) 470, RFP(s), winning and losing bids, completed bid evaluation matrices, signed contracts, and correspondence with potential bidders related to the competitive bidding process.
More information
REMINDER: If you missed the FY2008 non-recurring services invoicing deadline, file an invoice deadline extension request.

1/28/2010 – COMPETITIVE BIDDING: What if I don't receive any bids?
You can contact service providers both during your 28-day waiting period and after it to solicit bids. If you receive one bid or no bids during your 28 days, it is a good idea to document that fact in an email to yourself or a memo to the file for audit purposes.
More information
REMINDER: Make any necessary changes to your entity information before you start the online filing process for your Form 471.

1/27/2010 – COMPETITIVE BIDDING: Can I use a current contract as a bid response?
Yes. You can evaluate the offerings in a current contract along with any bids received as a result of your Form 470 and/or RFP. Although you cannot consider early termination charges or penalties as part of the cost of the eligible products and services, they can be considered in a separate, less heavily weighted, factor in your evaluation.
More information
REMINDER: Be sure to submit your FY2008 invoices for non-recurring services by January 28, 2010 if your invoicing deadline has not already been extended.

1/26/2010 – COMPETITIVE BIDDING: How do I prepare an evaluation grid?
Although price of the eligible goods and services must be the most heavily weighted factor in your evaluation, you can also include other factors that are important to you when you evaluate bids. You can refer to the sample bid evaluation matrix posted on the USAC website as a guide.
More information
REMINDER: Request new entity numbers now if you will need them to file your Form 471.

1/25/2010 – COMPETITIVE BIDDING: When can I sign a contract?

You must wait at least 28 days after your Form 470 is POSTED to the USAC website before you can sign a contract. If you issue an RFP after you post your Form 470, you must wait 28 days after your RFP is available to bidders.
More information
REMINDER: Be sure to submit your FY2008 invoices for non-recurring services by January 28, 2010 if your invoicing deadline has not already been extended.

1/20/2010 – Comment Period Established for CIPA NPRM

On November 5, 2009, the FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) FCC 09-96 to propose revising the FCC rules regarding the E-rate program to comply with the requirements of the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. Comments on the NPRM are due to the FCC on or before February 18, 2010, and reply comments on or before March 5, 2010. For information on how to file comments, refer to Public Notice DA 10-102.

1/14/2010 – Clarification on Comment Cycle for ESL FNPRM

On December 2, 2009, the FCC released a further notice of proposed rulemaking (FNPRM) FCC 09-105 seeking comment on the eligibility of certain services for funding under E-rate. Because Federal Register publication of the FNPRM is still pending, the FCC has released Public Notice DA 10-65 to notify commenters that reply comments are not due January 15, as indicated erroneously on the FCC's Electronic Document Management System (EDOCS). When the FNPRM is published in the Federal Register, the FCC will issue a public notice with the correct comment and reply comment dates.
The FCC will consider all comments that have already been filed in response to the FNPRM. You can also refile or supplement comments already filed, but if you are doing so please indicate that your current filing either replaces or supplements your earlier filing.
For more information, refer to Public Notice DA 10-65.