Schools and Libraries (E-Rate)

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LATEST NEWS 🔗

News Archive

USAC's News Archive gives you access to all announcements related to the Schools and Libraries Program as they were made throughout the years. The archives will be updated as new announcements are made.

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12/21/2012 – USAC Closed Monday and Tuesday, December 24-25, 2012
USAC offices, including the Schools and Libraries Client Service Bureau (CSB), will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, December 24-25, 2012.

12/12/2012 – FY2013 Application Window Now Open
The FY2013 application filing window for the FCC Form 471 opened at noon EST today and will close at 11:59 PM EDT on Thursday, March 14, 2013. The window will be open for 93 days. For more information, check out the Special Edition News Brief .

12/12/2012 – Special Edition News Brief Issued
A Special Edition of the Schools and Libraries News Brief is now available, announcing the opening of the FY2013 window and providing tips and reminders for filing. Subscribe to the News Brief to receive it each week in your inbox.

11/29/2012 – Scheduled System Maintenance: 8:00 PM Friday, November 30 - 1:00 AM EST Saturday, December 1
The Apply Online page, including Submit a Question, online forms, and most search tools will be unavailable from 8:00 PM Friday, November 30 to 1:00 AM EST, Saturday, December 1, 2012 for scheduled system maintenance. During this time, users may be unable to file, certify, and search for certain forms online.

11/26/2012 – New Version of FCC Form 498 Now Available
Beginning November 26, 2012, all service providers must use the new FCC Form 498 when applying for a new SPIN (Service Provider Identification Number) or when making changes to contact or remittance information to an existing SPIN.

USAC has posted the new FCC Form 498 and instructions on its website. No prior years' forms will be accepted; service providers who submit an outdated form will receive notice from USAC that the form could not be processed. E-File users will automatically see the newest version of the form upon log in, and their information will pre-populate.

Features of the new FCC Form 498 include:
• an additional field in block 3 for a company's Federal Registration Number (FRN);
• a column for the Study Area Code Company Name in Block 8;
• the ability for a carrier to designate an alternate bank account for the payment of BEAR funds in Block 11;
• a box in Block 1 and a supplemental information sheet to allow respondents to include information about affiliates;
• an update to the Principal Communications Types in Block 14 to include additional business types as listed on the FCC Form 499-A;
• a box after every program on the form that will allow service providers to cease participation in the associated program without having to deactivate their entire SPIN.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the FCC Form 498 and the notice was published in the Federal Register 📄 on November 21, 2012.

Please contact USAC Customer Operations at (888)641-8722 with any questions about the new FCC Form 498.

11/21/2012 – E-File Will Be Unavailable from 9:00 PM EST Monday, Nov. 26 to 7:00 AM EST Tuesday, Nov. 27
The E-File system will be unavailable from 9:00 PM EST on Monday, November 26th, until 7:00 AM EST on Tuesday, November 27th. Please plan your filing activity accordingly.

11/13/2012 – FY2013 Window Dates Announced
The FY2013 application filing window for the FCC Form 471 will open at noon EST on Wednesday, December 12, 2012, and close at 11:59 PM EDT on Thursday, March 14, 2013. The window will be open for 93 days. For more information, please refer to the Schools and Libraries Special Edition News Brief , issued November 13, 2012.

11/13/2012 – Special Edition News Brief Issued
A Special Edition of the Schools and Libraries News Brief is now available, announcing the FY2013 window dates and tips and reminders for filing. Subscribe to the News Brief to receive it each week in your inbox.

11/2/2012 – FCC Form 486 and FY2011 Recurring Services Invoice Deadlines Extended to Jan. 28, 2013

Due to the impact of Hurricane Sandy, USAC has extended the deadlines for FCC Form 486 and Funding Year 2011 recurring services invoice submissions until January 28, 2013. USAC will make this change for all participants and participants will not need to request this change individually.

The FCC Form 486 deadline for Funding Year 2012 FRNs has been moved to January 28, 2013. Any FCC Form 486 with a deadline up to that date will now be due on January 28, 2013, thus giving additional time to submit forms that may have missed the October deadline.

Additionally, recurring services delivered for Funding Year 2011 FRNs will now have an extended deadline until January 28, 2013. This is the same deadline as non-recurring services, making all invoices for Funding Year 2011 FRNs due at the same time.

We continue to monitor federal disaster declarations, and will allow extra time for applicants in the areas designated for relief to comply with various deadlines, including responding to PIA, and other program requirements. As usual, for those outside the federally declared disaster areas, if additional time to respond to PIA requests is needed, please do not hesitate to contact your reviewer and request such.

We will continue to post any new information to this website as necessary.

10/30/2012 – Status of USAC Operations Due to Hurricane Sandy

USAC operations have only been moderately affected by Hurricane Sandy. We are continuing to process applications and pay invoices as quickly as possible. Furthermore, the Client Service Bureau in Kansas remains open and ready to answer program questions. The fall applicant training sessions will continue as scheduled in Minneapolis, Portland, and Los Angeles.

As always, we will monitor federal disaster declarations, and will allow extra time for applicants in the areas designated for relief to comply with various deadlines, including responding to PIA, and other program requirements. Applicants requiring additional time to submit their BEAR invoices should request an invoice deadline extension as soon as possible.

We will continue to post any new information to this website as necessary.

10/28/2012 – USAC Closed Tuesday, October 30, 2012

Due to Hurricane Sandy, USAC is closed Monday and Tuesday, October 29-30, 2012.

10/18/2012 – Scheduled System Maintenance: 8:00 PM - 11:30 PM EDT Friday, October 19

The Apply Online page, including Submit a Question, online forms, and most search tools will be unavailable Friday, October 19 from 8:00 PM through 11:30 PM EDT for scheduled system maintenance. During this time, users may be unable to file, certify, and search for certain forms online.

9/28/2012 – FCC Releases Eligible Services List Report and Order

On September 27, 2012, the Federal Communications Commission released a Report and Order (DA 12-1553 📄) releasing the Eligible Services List for Funding Year 2013. The PDF version of the Eligible Services List with active hyperlinks will be available shortly.

9/13/2012 – Scheduled System Maintenance: 9:00 PM - 12:00 AM EDT Friday, September 14

The Apply Online page, including Submit a Question, online forms, and most search tools will be unavailable Friday, September 14 from 9:00 PM through 11:00 AM EDT for scheduled system maintenance. During this time, users may be unable to file, certify, and search for certain forms online.

8/17/2012 – Scheduled System Maintenance: 8:00-11:00 PM EDT Friday, August 17

The Apply Online page, including Submit a Question, online forms, and most search tools will be unavailable Friday, August 17 from 8:00 PM through 11:00 PM EDT for scheduled system maintenance. During this time, users may be unable to file, certify, and search for certain forms online.

8/1/2012 – Final P2 Funding Thresholds Set for FY2012 and FY2011

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the USAC Board have reviewed and approved USAC's proposed funding thresholds for FY2012 and FY2011 Priority 2 (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections) funding requests. The FCC and the USAC Board have approved USAC to take the following actions:

Set the final funding threshold for approved FY2012 Priority 2 (P2) funding requests at 90 percent. P2 funding requests at 89 percent and below will be denied for lack of funds.

Set the final funding threshold for approved FY2011 P2 funding requests at 88 percent. P2 funding requests at 87 percent and below will be denied for lack of funds.

USAC will target issuing commitments and denials using these thresholds next week.

Please note, however, that Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) reviews are ongoing, and USAC cannot issue funding decisions on an application until the reviews for all funding requests at all discount levels on that application are complete. For example, if an FCC Form 471 for FY2012 has one P2 funding request at 90 percent and another P2 funding request at 85 percent, USAC must wait until the review of the funding request at 90 percent has been completed before issuing a Funding Commitment Decision Letter for that application. Note further that the PIA review process may result in a change to the discount level(s) originally requested.

As a reminder, approved Priority 1 (Telecommunications Services and Internet Access) funding requests continue to be funded at all discount levels for both funding years.

7/27/2012 – News Brief Issued

This week's Schools and Libraries News Brief is now available. Receive E-Rate tips, deadline reminders, and answers to your questions in this weekly newsletter. Subscribe to it and receive it each week in your inbox.

7/19/2012 – Scheduled System Maintenance: 8:00-11:00 PM EDT Friday, July 20

The Apply Online page, including Submit a Question, online forms, and most search tools, will be unavailable from 8:00 PM EDT Friday, July 20

through 11:00 PM EDT, Friday, July 20, 2012, for scheduled system maintenance.

During this time, users may be unable to file, certify, and search for certain forms online.

7/18/2012 – FCC Directs USAC to Roll Over $1.050 Billion in Unused Funds to FY2012

On July 18, 2012, the FCC issued a Public Notice 📄 directing USAC to roll over the $1.050 billion in unused funds previously identified by USAC and make them available for FY2012 commitments. The FCC and the USAC Board must still approve funding for FY2012 Priority 2 funding requests. USAC will provide additional information on its website and in the weekly Schools and Libraries News Briefs as it becomes available.

7/13/2012 – USAC Identifies Additional Unused Funds Available for Carry Forward

On July 11, 2012 in a letter to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), USAC stated that it had identified an additional $650 million in unused funds from previous funding years that are currently available to be carried forward for subsequent funding years, bringing the total available for carry forward to $1.050 billion. USAC also stated that it believed such funds would be sufficient to make commitments at the 90 percent discount level for Priority 2 requests for FY2012. However, before any commitments using these funds can be made, the FCC would have to issue a Public Notice directing USAC to roll these funds over to make them available for FY2012 commitments and the FCC and the USAC Board would have to approve funding for FY2012 Priority 2 funding requests at this discount level.

USAC will provide additional information on its website and in the weekly Schools and Libraries News Briefs as it becomes available.

7/13/2012 – FY2013 FCC Form 470 Available for Online Filing

USAC has now enabled online filing for FY2013 for the FCC Form 470, Description of Services Requested and Certification Form. USAC can also process paper FCC Forms 470 that feature FY2013 as the funding year in Block 1. (As a reminder, the first day of FY2013 is July 1, 2013.)

If you have already filed an FCC Form 470 for FY2012 and noted in Item 13 that you intended the form for FY2013 services, remember that you cannot cite this form for non-contracted services provided under tariff or on a month-to-month basis. For these services, you must file an FCC Form 470 featuring FY2013 in Block 1, Item 2.

7/5/2012 – FCC Establishes Comment Period for FY2013 Eligible Services List

On July 5, 2012, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Public Notice (DA 12-1052 📄) establishing the comment period for the Funding Year 2013 Eligible Services List (ESL).

Comments on the FY2013 draft ESL 📄 are due to the FCC on or before August 6, 2012. Reply comments are due to the FCC on or before August 21, 2012. For a summary of proposed changes to the ESL and information on filing comments with the FCC, please refer to the Public Notice.

6/28/2012 – USAC Releases First Commitments for FY2012

Download Release 📄

6/1/2012 – News Brief Issued

This week's Schools and Libraries News Brief is now available. Receive E-Rate tips, deadline reminders, and answers to your questions in this weekly newsletter. Subscribe to it and receive it each week in your inbox.

5/23/2012 – Fall Applicant Trainings Announced - Register Today!

This fall, join USAC at a training for schools, libraries, and consortia that participate in the Schools and Libraries (E-Rate) Program. These complimentary trainings are very popular and are limited to 200 participants each, so please register early. Visit the Trainings and Outreach page for more information.

5/21/2012 – FCC Announces Funding Cap for FY2012

On May 18, 2012, the Wireline Competition Bureau announced in Public Notice DA 12-791 📄 that the E-Rate program funding cap for funding year 2012 is $2,338,786,577. The new cap represents a 2.1% inflation-adjusted increase from FY2011's $2,290,682,250 cap.

5/17/2012 – Scheduled System Maintenance 8:00 PM Friday, May 18 to 1:00 AM EDT, Saturday, May 19, 2012

The Apply Online page, including Submit a Question, online forms, and most search tools, will be unavailable from 8:00 PM EDT Friday, May 18 through 1:00 AM EDT, Saturday, May 19, 2012, for scheduled system maintenance. During this time, users may be unable to file, certify, and search for certain forms online.

5/3/2012 – Presentation Slides Now Available for Service Provider Trainings

The agenda and presentation slides are now available for the Spring 2012 Service Provider Trainings.

5/2/2012 – Deadline May 9 - Certify FY2012 FCC Forms 471 and Submit Item 21 Attachments

May 9, 2012 is the last day to submit FY2012 Item 21 attachments and FY2012 FCC Form 471 certifications and still have them considered in-window.

> **If you do not submit an Item 21 attachment on or before May 9, the Block 5 Funding Request Number (FRN) associated with that Item 21 attachment will be considered out-of-window.** You can submit an Item 21 attachment online , by email, or by fax on or before May 9; you can also postmark a paper Item 21 attachment on or before May 9. The Item 21 attachments web page contains detailed information on preparing and submitting Item 21 attachments.

> **If you do not certify your FCC Form 471 on or before May 9, your form will be considered out-of-window.** You can certify an FCC Form 471 online on or before May 9 if you have a PIN; you can also postmark a paper certification on or before May 9.

4/25/2012 – Registration for Service Provider Trainings Now Closed
Registration for the Spring Service Provider Trainings in Los Angeles, CA, and Atlanta, GA, is now closed.

4/24/2012 – Agenda Now Available for Spring Service Provider Trainings
The training agenda 📄 is now available for the Schools and Libraries (E-Rate) Spring Service Provider Trainings. Visit the Atlanta and Los Angeles training information pages to learn more.

4/24/2012 – USAC Provides Demand Estimate for Funding Year 2012 to FCC
On April 20, 2012, the Schools and Libraries Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) reported to the Federal Communications Commission that $5.24 billion in requested funding has been estimated for schools and libraries seeking discounts for Funding Year 2012. This estimate is based on the dollars requested in 46,838 applications received or postmarked by March 20, 2012, the close of the FCC 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 FY2012 Demand Estimate 📄.

4/17/2012 – *Update* Scheduled System Maintenance 4/19 - 4/23/2012
The Schools and Libraries section on the USAC website will be unavailable from 8:00 PM EDT on **Thursday**, **April 19** to 8:00 AM EDT on Monday, April 23 for scheduled maintenance. The static pages, Submit a Question, Apply Online, and search functions will be unavailable. Users should plan to finish any online activities early on Thursday, April 19, or wait until Monday, April 23 to start them.

We apologize in advance for any inconvenience.

4/13/2012 – New Website Launched
This week, USAC launched its new website, designed to make it easier to find and understand online information and tools for participating in universal service programs. For beneficiaries, contributors, and service providers who rely on USAC's website for news, program requirements, and resources, all the same content and tools remain available. USAC has streamlined and multiplied the pathways for people to find what they need, clarified language, and de-cluttered the look and feel of the pages. These changes should serve particularly well the needs of newcomers to universal service, trying to make a successful start with contributions or participation in any of the four programs.

Email USAC with any comments or questions. Brief tutorials are available to help users get oriented to the new website.

3/27/2012 – "470 No 471" Email Notifications Issued
Each year, USAC sends a notification to applicants that have timely posted an FCC Form 470 to the USAC website but not yet filed an FCC Form 471 funding request citing that FCC Form 470. In the past, USAC has issued this notification by letter – one letter per form – shortly after the last day to post an FCC Form 470 and still complete all of the program activities necessary to file an FCC Form 471 by the close of the filing window.

On March 2, USAC prepared an email to each FCC Form 470 contact person or authorized person with a timely posted FCC Form 470 not cited on any FCC Form 471 Block 5 funding request (Item 11 on the form) as of February 28. For each unique email address, this email contained all affected FCC Form 470 application numbers and all Billed Entity Numbers. We expect this improved format to prove more helpful and less confusing to applicants.

> If the contact person email address appeared in Item 6e of the form, the email was sent to the contact person.

> If the contact person email address was blank but the authorized person email address appeared in Item 27f of the form, the email was sent to the authorized person.

> NOTE: If both email address fields were blank, USAC issued a letter – one per form – and sent the letters to the contact person street address (Item 6b of the form).

Of the almost 27,500 forms that fit the above criteria, all but about 700 were included in email notifications.
Please note: Applicants must still wait at least 28 days after the posting of the FCC Form 470 – or the public availability of a Request for Proposals (RFP), if one was issued – before closing the competitive bidding process, choosing a service provider, signing a contract (if applicable), and signing and submitting the FCC Form 471 by 11:59 PM ET on Tuesday, March 20.

3/8/2012 – CSB Extended Hours for FY2012 Window Questions
The Client Service Bureau (CSB) will be open extended hours before the close of the window to assist last-minute filers with program questions. You can call (888) 203-8100, Submit a Question , or fax your question or request to (888) 276-8736.
CSB is open weekdays from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM ET. In addition, CSB will be open the following hours:

DATE	OPEN	CLOSE
Saturday, March 17	9:00 AM EDT	6:00 PM EDT
Sunday, March 18	9:00 AM EDT	6:00 PM EDT
Monday, March 19	8:00 AM EDT	11:00 PM EDT
Tuesday, March 20	8:00 AM EDT	12:30 AM EDT (March 21)

3/2/2012 – "470 No 471" Email Notifications Issued
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2/10/2012 – FY2012 FCC Form 470 Deadline – Tuesday, February 21

Submit FCC Form 470 online now. If you have not yet submitted your FCC Form 470, do so online as soon as possible. The last possible day to post an FCC Form 470 for FY2012 and still timely file an FCC Form 471 is Tuesday, February 21, 2012.

1/13/2012 – The Schools and Libraries Client Service Bureau will be closed on Monday, January 16, 2012

The Schools and Libraries Client Service Bureau will be closed Monday, January 16 in observance of Martin Luther King Day. The Client Service Bureau will resume normal operations on Tuesday, January 17 at 8:00 am EST.

1/10/2012 – First Applicants Finish Online FY2012 Applications

Congratulations to the first applicants that filed and certified an FCC Form 471 for FY2012 – including the Item 21 attachment(s) – online! Applicants that file early have a much better chance of being included in the earliest funding waves for a funding year.

The first successful online filers were:

First individual school: PIMERIA ALTA ACADEMY, Nogales, Arizona

First school district: WEST POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS, West Point, Virginia

First library: MONITEAU COUNTY/PRICE JAMES LIBRARY, Tipton, Missouri

First consortium: CLARE-GLADWIN RESD, Clare, Michigan

Remember that the Item 21 attachment is a window filing requirement for FY2012 and must be submitted by March 20, 2012.

1/6/2012 – Online BEAR and E-file System Unavailable This Weekend

Access to the online BEAR system and the service provider E-file System will be unavailable from 9:00 pm EST on Friday, January 6 through 8:00 am EST on Monday, January 9 due to system upgrade work.

During this time:

Applicants will not be able to submit BEAR Forms online.

Service providers will not be able to approve BEAR Forms online.

Service providers will not be able to view Item 21 attachments for FY2011 and previous funding years that applicants filed online.

Service providers will not be able to log in to the E-file System to perform other activities such as assigning permissions or updating Form 498 information.