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Funding Status – FY 2021

Wave 18 for FY 2021 was released on Thursday, August 12th, for a total of \$82.9 million including \$1.55 million for 6 North Carolina. Cumulative commitments are \$1.89 billion including \$74.7 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has now funded 90% of the FY 2021 applications representing 64% of the requested funding.

ECF Application Window Closed

The 2021-2022 application window for the Emergency Connectivity Fund (“ECF”) closed last Friday, August 13th. If USAC matches its application processing rate with the success it achieved for regular FY 2021 applications earlier this spring, we would expect the first wave of ECF funding commitment decision letters (“FCDLs”) in less than four weeks. More broadly, the FCC’s target is to have USAC issue FCDLs for 50% of the workable applications within 60 days and 70% within 100 days.

Currently, there is little data available on the total amount of ECF funding requested during this initial window. USAC is currently working on providing Open Data access to ECF information with a mandate from the FCC to have it available no later than January 29th — and hopefully well before that. In the meantime, lack of data is a challenge for all stakeholders — applicants, service providers, USAC and the FCC — seeking to gauge the real ECF demand.

In the interim, the best we have is survey data. Based on our analysis of a sample of applications filed by 330 public school applicants representing over 1.65 million students, we noted the following:

- The average applicant in our sample filed for \$300 per student. Extrapolating that unit request to the national student base would push total requests above the \$7 billion program cap that would require an allocation of funds to needy applicants. Fortunately, a sizable number of schools and libraries did not apply.
- Additionally, we should note that our sample was skewed by a \$430 per student request from one very large school district. The median per student request in our survey was about \$245.

- Per student requests in excess of \$400 appeared to include a large number of connected devices (e.g., Chromebooks) and services for a large proportion of the applicant student base, either students (and staff) who had not been provided with home services before or who had been using out-of-date equipment deemed no longer sufficient for remote learning.
- Substantial funding was requested for hotspots and for increased numbers of students particularly in expanding charter schools.
- Funding over \$3,000 per student was requested by a few applicants planning network construction in unserved areas.

We noticed a relatively large number of incomplete applications as of the window deadline. As may become clearer later this week, some of these applicants may be intending to submit late-filed applications in the hopes that the FCC, as it has with traditional E-rate applications, waives the deadline for applications filed within 14 days. As we indicated in our [newsletter of August 9th](#), the FCC has not yet formally indicated its waiver policy for late-filed applications. A final FCC decision may depend on total demand estimates for in-window filings. Out-of-window applicants planning to file waivers should review USAC’s recently posted instructions for submitting [ECF window waiver requests](#) (importantly reminding filers that the ECF waiver deadline is 30 days, not the traditional 60 days).

E-Rate Updates and Reminders

Upcoming E-Rate Dates:

August 19	Form 486 deadline for FY 2020 covering funding committed in Wave 52. More generally, the Form 486 deadline is 120 days from the FCDL date or the service start date (typically July 1 st), whichever is later. Upcoming Form 486 deadlines are:
	Wave 53 09/02/2021
	Wave 54 09/09/2021

USAC ECF Advisories and Newsletter Dated August 9–12

Last week, approaching the ECF application window deadline, USAC released its regular Tuesday newsletter plus three other comparable advisory emails, namely:

- [August 9th advisory](#)
- [August 10th newsletter](#)
- [August 11th advisory](#)
- [August 12th advisory](#) (nothing new)

Newsletter information and disclaimer: This newsletter may contain unofficial information on prospective E-rate developments and/or may reflect E-Rate Central's own interpretations of E-rate practices and regulations. Such information is provided for planning and guidance purposes only. It is not meant, in any way, to supplant official announcements and instructions provided by USAC, the FCC, or NCDPI.

Additional North Carolina specific E-rate information is available through our Web site — <http://www.e-ratecentral.com/us/stateInformation.asp?state=NC>. Note that this site provides easy access to formatted North Carolina applicant E-rate histories via the Billed Entity Number (“BEN”) search mechanism in the upper left-hand corner. Detailed information can be obtained by “drilling down” using the links for specific funding years and individual FRNs.

If you have received this newsletter from a colleague and you would like to receive your own copy of the North Carolina E-Rate Forum, send an email to join-ncerate@lists.dpi.state.nc.us. Please include your name, organization, telephone, and e-mail address.

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