North Carolina E-Rate Forum

Weekly E-Rate Newsletter
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FY 2022 Application Window

The FY 2022 Form 471 Application Window opened on **Wednesday, January 12, 2022**, at 12:00 noon EST and will close on Tuesday, March 22, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. EDT.

Funding Status for 2021-2022

E-Rate:

Wave 41 for FY 2021 was released on Thursday, January 20th, for a total of $32.7 million, none for North Carolina applicants. Cumulative commitments are now $2.57 billion including $84.6 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has now funded 98% of the FY 2021 applications representing 92% of the requested funding.

ECF:

Wave 7 was released on January 10th for a total of $361 million including $10.1 million for North Carolina applicants. Cumulative ECF commitments are $4.19 billion including $137 million for North Carolina. Unlike E-rate, for which funding waves are issued weekly, ECF funding waves are being released roughly once a month. ECF invoice payments, also issued in waves, appear to be issued more frequently. Authorized disbursements as of last Friday totaled $253 million.

FCC Finalizes ACP Order and FNPRM

The FCC's final Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("FNPRM") (FCC 22-2) for the Affordable Connectivity Program ("ACP") was released late last Friday following the FCC's approval of the Order the previous Friday. The primary difference between the final Order and the draft that had been released earlier in January was the inclusion of a new

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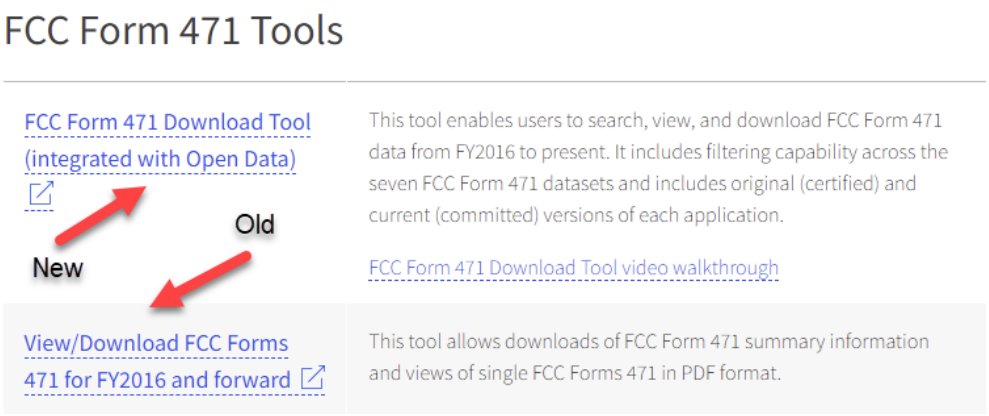
section in the FNPRM. This section seeks comment on a pilot program focused on eligible households participating in Federal Public Housing Assistance ("FPHA") programs (see Paragraphs 281-286).

Most importantly for schools and libraries, the section on bulk purchasing arrangements and multiple dwelling units ("MDUs"), including the eligibility of homeless shelters, remains unchanged (see our newsletter of January 10th).[1]

Comments on the FNPRM portion of the ACP Order will be due 30 days after its publication in the *Federal Register*. Reply comments will be due another 30 days thereafter.

USAC's New Form 471 Download Tool

USAC launched a new E-Rate Form 471 Download Tool last Thursday. The new tool, providing detailed access to Form 471 data for FY 2016 forward, is available through USAC's E-Rate Open Data website directly or through the E-Rate Tools page. Within the Tools section of USAC's E-rate website, the new tool is currently the first of the two Form 471 tools.

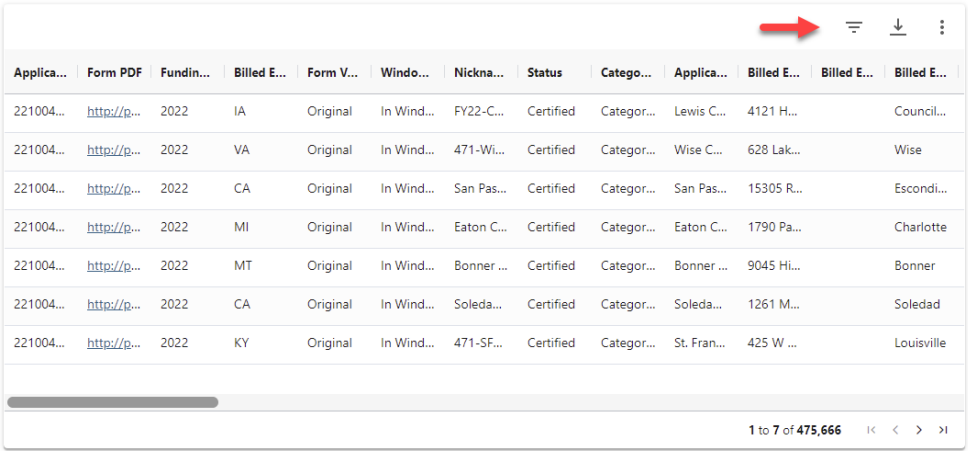


The older Form 471 tool, which will be retired later this week, provided less data and had to be downloaded by state then searched or sorted for specific applications. The new tool, with a powerful filtering system, provides direct access to the following types of Form 471 data:

- Basic Form 471 data
- Consultant information
- Discount calculations
- FRN status
- FRN line items
- Recipients of service
- Connectivity data

[1] One minor change, indicated in an addition to footnote 310 dealing with the eventual need to transition ECF bulk subscriptions to ACP bulk subscriptions, suggests that continued household eligibility would be subject to an approved ACP verification process.

Each dataset can be filtered, downloaded, or viewed using the icons in the upper right-hand corner of each data window as shown in the following example:



Applica...	Form PDF	Fundin...	Billed E...	Form V...	Windo...	Nickna...	Status	Catego...	Applica...	Billed E...	Billed E...	Billed E...
221004...	http://p...	2022	IA	Original	In Wind...	FY22-C...	Certified	Categor...	Lewis C...	4121 H...		Council...
221004...	http://p...	2022	VA	Original	In Wind...	471-Wi...	Certified	Categor...	Wise C...	628 Lak...		Wise
221004...	http://p...	2022	CA	Original	In Wind...	San Pas...	Certified	Categor...	San Pas...	15305 R...		Escondi...
221004...	http://p...	2022	MI	Original	In Wind...	Eaton C...	Certified	Categor...	Eaton C...	1790 Pa...		Charlotte
221004...	http://p...	2022	MT	Original	In Wind...	Bonner ...	Certified	Categor...	Bonner ...	9045 Hi...		Bonner
221004...	http://p...	2022	CA	Original	In Wind...	Soleda...	Certified	Categor...	Soleda...	1261 M...		Soledad
221004...	http://p...	2022	KY	Original	In Wind...	471-SF...	Certified	Categor...	St. Fran...	425 W ...		Louisville

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The functional explanation of the three icons is as follows:

1. **Filter** data using the upside down triangle icon that is the first button on the left of the table menu icons.

2. **Download** data using the downward pointing arrow icon that is the middle button of the table menu icons.

3. **View** a link to the Open Dataset for the table in a separate browser tab using the three buttons icon on the right of the table menu icons.

To learn how to use the tool in some common use-cases, watch USAC's tool walkthrough video. In addition, if you are new to USAC's Open Data platform, USAC has beginner-level videos that introduce and explain how to get started using the Open Data platform.

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

January 27	Next FCC Open Meeting at which the commission will consider a Report and Order that would amend the definition of library in the Commission's rules to clarify that Tribal libraries are eligible for support through the E-Rate Program.
January 28	Form 486 deadline for FY 2021 covering funding committed in Wave 25. More generally, the Form 486 deadline is 120 days from the FCDL date or

from the service start date (typically July 1st), whichever is later. Upcoming Form 486 deadlines are:

Wave 26	02/04/2022
Wave 27	02/11/2022
Wave 28	02/18/2022

January 28	Invoice filing deadline for FY 2019 and FY 2020 non-recurring services.
February 17	FCC comments due on the Future of the Universal Service Fund Notice of Inquiry (FCC 21-127) (see our newsletter of December 20th). Reply comments are due March 17th. Note: These are new comment deadlines based on the recent FCC extension order (DA 22-6).
February 25	Extended invoice filing deadline for FY 2020 recurring services.
February 22	Last possible date to file a Form 470 in time to meet the 28-day posting requirement for the close of the Form 471 application window for FY 2022.
March 22	FY 2022 Form 471 Application Filing Window closes at 11:59 p.m. EDT.

USAC ECF Newsletter dated January 18 – One New FAQ

USAC's Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter of January 18, 2022, largely a repeat of previous versions, does include the following new FAQ dealing with potentially eligible ECF services received prior to July 1, 2021:

Our service provider delivered the eligible equipment earlier than we requested. What should we do if the equipment for which we are seeking reimbursement was delivered before July 1, 2021?

If an applicant receives the equipment and/or services prior to July 1, 2021 (e.g., the start of the relevant funding period for the first and second application filing windows), they may seek a waiver of the FCC's rules to be able to seek reimbursement for that equipment and/or services. Applicants seeking a waiver should include a brief description of the issue including information about order and delivery timing. For more information on submitting a waiver request with the FCC, please review the Emergency Connectivity Fund website.

USAC E-Rate News Brief Dated January 20 – FY 2022 Application Window Pointers

USAC's E-Rate News Brief of January 20, 2022, covers the following topics concerning the FY 2022 Form 471 application window:

- In all but a few limited circumstances, FY 2022 applicants must file a Form 470 to begin the competitive bidding process.
- February 22nd is the last possible day to file a Form 470 in time to meet the 28-day posting requirement in time to select bidders, sign contracts, and certify a Form 471 by the close of the Form 471 application window on March 22nd.
- Most E-rate eligible services require contracts that must be uploaded into EPC before an associated funding request can be created in a Form 471 application.

- Applicants who have not accessed EPC in the last six months should understand that USAC has added an additional step to the login process. Applicants must now log in to the One Portal system using a multi-factor authentication system. Applicants whose passwords have not been used for at least 60 days will have to reset their existing passwords.

Thursday's News Brief also discusses:

- Deadline relief for E-rate participants in Mississippi and Louisiana affected by Hurricane Ida.
- USAC's new Form 471 Download Tool (discussed above).

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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