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FY 2022 Application Window

The FY 2022 Form 471 Application Window will close on Tuesday, March 22, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. EDT. February 22nd was the last possible day to file a Form 470 for FY 2022 and still meet the required 28-day posting requirement.

Funding Status for 2021-2022

E-Rate:

Wave 47 for FY 2021 was released on Thursday, March 3rd, for zero dollars (reflecting only the cancellation of three applications). Cumulative commitments remain \$2.61 billion including \$84.3 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has funded 98.5% of the FY 2021 applications representing 93.2% of the requested funding.

ECF:

As of Wave 10 ([released](#) on February 23rd), cumulative ECF [commitments](#) are \$4.54 billion including \$148 million for North Carolina. \$51.4 million for New Mexico. \$501 million for New York. \$470 million for Texas. \$205 million for E-Rate Central clients. Nationwide, USAC has funded 88.6% of filed applications. Authorized disbursements as of last Friday totaled \$364 million.

Early Indications of ECF Payment Audits

A few ECF applicants, which have already received ECF reimbursements, have reported receiving emails notifying them that they had been selected for “payment audits.” The emails are coming from Censeo Consulting Group (“Censeo”) that has been engaged by the FCC — not USAC — to “ensure that ECF Program participants are adhering to program requirements and complying with FCC rules.”

The cover email indicates that it is possible that Conseo can complete its audit with the information and documents provided during the ECF application and request for reimbursement processes, but that additional documentation may be required. We expect this means that the audits will focus on the products and services requested, their costs, and their relationship to the “unmet need” of students, staff, and patrons. To date, we have not seen any specific requests for additional information.

With regard to privacy concerns likely to arise with inquiries regarding unmet needs, Censeo’s opening email includes the following paragraph:

We will also adhere to applicable federal and state privacy laws regarding student, school staff, and library patron personally identifiable information and will seek to use anonymized or deidentified information wherever possible. In the event that student, school staff, or library patron personally identifiable information is necessary for this audit, we will request that you first obtain the consent of the parents or guardians for minor students and the consent of legal-aged students, school staff, or library patrons to have access to this information before sharing the information. Any personally identifiable information provided, will be used and safeguarded as required by applicable federal and state privacy laws.

Additional information on the ECF audit program is expected to become available in the coming weeks.

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

March 11 Form 486 deadline for FY 2021 covering funding committed in Wave 31. 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 32	03/18/2022
Wave 33	03/24/2022

March 16 FCC comments due on the Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the Affordable Connectivity Program (“ACP”) ([FCC 22-2](#)). Reply comments are due April 15th. See FCC Public Notice ([DA 22-152](#)).

[E-Rate Central and Westhab](#) filed initial ACP comments last week proposing Pilot Programs for better administrating ACP discounts for low-income housing complexes and homeless shelters.

March 22 FY 2022 Form 471 Application Filing Window closes at 11:59 p.m. EDT.

March 28 FCC comments due on the FCC’s proposal to create an E-rate competitive bidding portal ([FCC 21-124](#)). Reply comments are due April 27th.

A [motion to extend](#) these comment deadlines by 30 days was filed last Friday by SECA and a wide range of national school and library organizations.

FCC Streamlined Decisions:

The FCC issued another set of “streamlined” precedent-based decisions ([DA 22-188](#)) last week. As with past streamlined decisions, applicants facing similar problems as those addressed in these decisions may garner useful information by carefully reading the additional FCC explanations found in the footnotes. The original appeal and waiver requests can be found online in the FCC’s [Search for Filings](#) under Docket 02-6 (E-rate) or Docket 21-93 (ECF).

In February’s streamlined decisions, the FCC:

1. E-Rate Granted:
 - a. One Petition for Reconsideration from FY 2002 involving the late utilization of E-rate funded equipment.
 - b. One Request for Waiver for ministerial and/or clerical errors involving an incorrect pre-discount price.
 - c. One Request for Waiver reflecting a service implementation delay.
 - d. One Request for Waiver for an untimely appeal filed “within a reasonable period of time after receiving actual notice of USAC’s adverse decision.”
 - e. One Request for Waiver extending an invoice deadline involving a USAC decision issued after the original deadline.
2. E-Rate Denied:
 - a. Six Requests for Waiver for invoice extensions.
 - b. Two Requests for Waiver for untimely filed appeals or waiver requests.
3. ECF Granted:
 - a. Twenty-two Requests for Waiver for late-filed ECF applications filed within 14 days of the close of the window.
 - b. Eleven Requests for Waiver for late-filed ECF applications filed more than 30 days after the close of the window by applicants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

USAC ECF Newsletter dated March 1 – New Service Delivery Deadline FAQs

[USAC’s Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter of March 1, 2022](#), includes two new FAQs dealing with the extended ECF service delivery deadline.

What is the extended service delivery date and invoicing deadline for funding requests submitted during the first and second application filing windows?

See our [newsletter of February 28th](#) for details of the FCC’s recent decision to extend most ECF service delivery deadlines to June 30, 2023.

Can I receive additional funding for recurring services beyond June 30, 2022, with the FCC's new service delivery date extension?

No, once a funding commitment has been issued, any post-commitment requests to increase the funding amount for a committed funding request will be denied.

USAC's latest ECF Newsletter also repeats reimbursement reminders from previous versions.

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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