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## Funding Status for E-Rate and ECF

### *E-Rate for FY 2022:*

The FY 2022 Form 471 Application Window closed on Tuesday, March 22, 2022. We expect FY 2022 funding waves to commence in mid-to-late April.

A special extended application window for new Tribal libraries closes on May 26<sup>th</sup> (see [DA 22-231](#) and our [newsletter of March 14<sup>th</sup>](#)).

### *E-Rate for FY 2021:*

USAC did not release a FY 2021 funding wave last week. As of Wave 52, issued the previous week, cumulative commitments stand at \$2.64 billion including \$84.3 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has funded 98.7% of the FY 2021 applications representing 95.1% of the requested funding.

### *ECF 2021-2023:*

As of Wave 12, released March 23<sup>rd</sup>, cumulative ECF commitments are \$4.76 billion including \$150 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has funded 92.5% of filed applications. Authorized disbursements as of last Friday totaled \$774 million.

The FCC has announced a third ECF application window ([DA 22-309](#)) which will open on April 28<sup>th</sup> and close on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The FCC indicates that a minimum of \$1 billion will be available to fund the same type of eligible equipment and services as in the original two windows but for

delivery within the 18-month span from July 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023 (albeit capped at 12-months of service for internet access). For details, see our [newsletter of March 28<sup>th</sup>](#) and the FAQs in USAC's [ECF newsletter of March 29<sup>th</sup>](#).

## Updates and Reminders

### *Upcoming Dates:*

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| April 22 | Form 486 deadline for FY 2021 covering funding committed in Wave 37. More generally, the Form 486 deadline is 120 days from the FCDL date or from the service start date (typically July 1 <sup>st</sup> ), whichever is later. Upcoming Form 486 deadlines are:<br>Wave 38                      04/29/2022<br>Wave 39                      05/06/2022<br>Wave 40                      05/13/2022<br>Wave 41                      05/20/2022 |
| April 26 | First of USAC's three upcoming ECF information sessions (see ECF Newsletter below).  |
| April 27 | FCC comments due on the FCC's proposal to create an E-rate competitive bidding portal ( <a href="#">FCC 21-124</a> ). Reply comments are due May 27 <sup>th</sup> .  |
| April 28 | Opening of the third ECF application window (see <a href="#">DA 22-309</a> and article above). The window will close May 13 <sup>th</sup> at 11:59 p.m. EDT.   |
| May 16   | FCC comments due on the FCC's Notice of Inquiry regarding the prevention and elimination of digital discrimination ( <a href="#">FCC 22-21</a> ). Reply comments are due June 30 <sup>th</sup> .   |
| May 26   | Extended FY 2022 application window deadline for new Tribal libraries (see <a href="#">DA 22-231</a> ).  |

### *Funds For Learning's 12<sup>th</sup> Annual E-Rate Survey:*

For more than a decade, Funds For Learning ("FFL") has been conducting a nationwide survey asking schools and libraries to contribute their opinions and experiences regarding the E-rate program. These surveys have become an increasingly important source of information for Congress, the FCC, and USAC to help them evaluate the E-rate program. E-Rate Central believes that FFL's survey is an extremely important vehicle, particularly for policymakers, to understand the needs of the E-rate community. A copy of the [2021 survey results](#), as provided to the FCC, is worth reviewing to understand the survey's importance. We urge you to participate.

Here's what you need to know:

- The 2022 survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/22erate>. The survey consists of 34 primary questions, plus 6 more optional demographic items. It should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

- Survey results are completely confidential. Only aggregate data is reported.
- We urge you to pay particular attention to four new questions added this year regarding the proposed competitive bidding portal (see our [newsletter of November 29, 2021](#)). Initial comments on this proceeding ([FCC 21-124](#)) are due April 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Funds For Learning, which like E-Rate Central is an E-rate consultant, does not use survey responses as a marketing tool. We are confident in the integrity of FFL’s survey process and encourage you to participate.

Last year, responses were received from approximately 10% of the E-rate applicant base. Given the importance of this survey to the entire E-rate community — applicants, service providers, administrators, and particularly policymakers — we would like to see even greater participation this year.

#### *E-Rate and ECF Late-Filed Application Waivers:*

The FCC released an interesting Order ([DA 22-399](#)) last week granting waivers to 15 petitioners for late-filed applications in E-rate funding years FY 2018 and FY 2019 and for last year’s second ECF window.

Most of the waivers granted in this Order were for applications that would have been filed within 14 days of the close of the window had those applicants not been misled by out-of-window messages generated by the EPC and ECF portals suggesting that FCC waivers, not the applications themselves, needed to be filed first. The FCC agreed that the timing of these messages caused confusion and resulted in the applicants having filed waivers with the FCC before completing and certifying their Form 471 applications. The Order directs USAC to amend the language of the EPC- and ECF-generated messages for applications started and/or completed after the application filing window has closed.

The Order also includes waivers for E-rate applications filed more than 30 days after the FY 2018 and FY 2019 window deadlines due to serious medical conditions defined in one case as a concussion causing “memory and cognitive issues” and, in a second case, as “brain surgery.”

Applicants granted these waivers, that had not already filed their Form 471 applications, were given 30 days to do so.

#### *ACP FNPRM Reply Comments:*

Last Friday was the reply comment deadline to respond to the FCC’s Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“FNPRM”) on the Affordable Connectivity Program (“ACP”). Many of the reply comments came from industry trade associations seeking short stays in ACP requirements to apply discounts to all internet plans and/or to implement non-usage tracking rules.

Public interest groups submitted reply comments stressing the need for extensive outreach programs. The American Association of Service Coordinators (“[AASC](#)”), for example, noted that it is not enough to simply advertise the availability of ACP discounts. Assistance is needed, not

only to help with enrollment, but to provide technology training before and after enrollment. AASC also pointed to the lack of building infrastructure to provide wireless internet access within multifamily buildings.

[E-Rate Central](#) and its affordable housing filing partner, WestHab (Yonkers, NY), urged the FCC to remove, modify, or clarify the restrictive footnote in the original ACP Order that limited the use of ACP discounts in homeless shelters. Westhab proposed a centrally-managed pilot program to demonstrate the efficiency of shelter-wide, ACP-discounted, internet services. [E-Rate Advantage](#), another E-rate consulting firm, agreed that “homeless shelter residents should be afforded the same access to ACP discounts as the residents of any other low-income multiple dwelling unit facility.”

Recommended reading for others interested in the provision of affordable internet services for low-income families include:

- The [Federal Communications Commission Equity Action Plan, a report issued last week “Pursuant to the President’s Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.”](#)
- The FCC’s current Notice of Inquiry ([FCC 22-21](#)) entitled “Implementing the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: Prevention and Elimination of Digital Discrimination.” Comments are due May 16<sup>th</sup>; reply comments are due June 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **USAC ECF Newsletter Dated April 12**

[USAC’s Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter of April 12, 2022](#), includes many of the reminders and FAQs from last week’s newsletter but also includes the following:

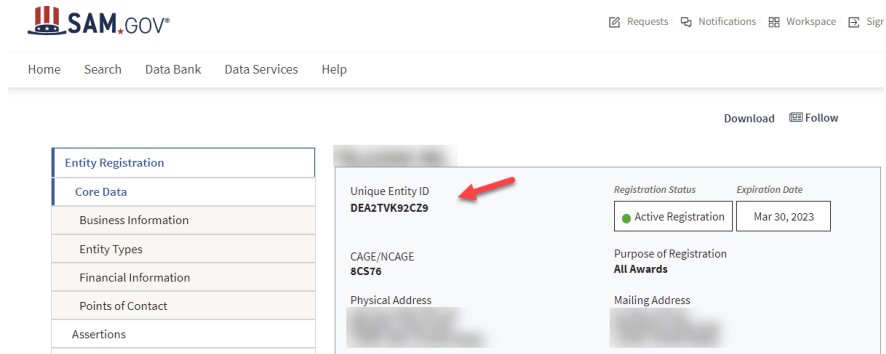
### *ECF Information Sessions:*

USAC announced three new information and “office hours” sessions dealing with the upcoming ECF Window 3 application period.

- Tuesday, April 26 at 3:00 p.m. EDT: ECF Window 3 Information Session – [Register](#)
- Tuesday, May 3 at 3:00 p.m. EDT: ECF Window 3 Office Hours – [Register](#)
- Tuesday, May 10 at 3:00 p.m. EDT: ECF Window 3 Office Hours – [Register](#)

### *SAM.gov Transition Update:*

As reported in our [newsletter of April 11<sup>th</sup>](#), a new Unique Entity Identifier (“UEI”) is now required for SAM.gov registrations, replacing the earlier DUNS number for identification purposes. ECF applicants and service providers with current SAM.gov registrations, required for ECF invoicing purposes, will find that the DUNS number is no longer displayed. Here’s an example of an updated registration:



The ECF Newsletter references the FCC’s [Public Notice DA 22-371](#) on the transition but does not mention the FCC’s longer-term plan to require UEI identifiers and/or SAM.gov registration for all Universal Service Fund (“USF”) — including E-rate — participants. Although this is unlikely to occur before 2023, unregistered entities wishing to get a jump on the process can view two useful videos on [Obtaining an UEI Number](#) and [Registering for SAM.gov](#).

### *ECF Window 3 Reminder:*

USAC announced that, in preparation for ECF Window 3, the ability to submit late-filed Window 2 applications will be deactivated as of April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Any uncertified out-of-window applications will be canceled prior to the opening of the third application window on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

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*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](mailto:join-ncerate@lists.dpi.state.nc.us). Please include your name, organization, telephone, and e-mail address.*

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