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Funding Status for E-Rate and ECF

E-Rate for FY 2022:

Wave 10 for FY 2022 was issued on Thursday, June 23rd, for \$82.8 million including 3.99 million for twenty-four North Carolina applicants. Cumulative commitments to date are \$1.88 billion including \$42.7 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has funded 89.2% of the FY 2022 applications representing 60.5% of the requested funding.

E-Rate for FY 2021:

There was no additional funding for FY 2021 last week. As of Wave 57, commitments for FY 2021 stand at \$2.64 billion including \$84.2 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has funded 98.8% of the FY 2021 applications representing 95.8% of the requested funding.

ECF for 2021-2023:

There was no additional ECF funding last week. As of the [most recent ECF waves](#) — Wave 16 for ECF-1 and ECF-2 applications and Wave 1 for ECF-3 applications — total commitments are \$5.14 billion including \$151 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has funded 63.6% of applications filed in all three ECF windows. Authorized disbursements as of last weekend totaled \$1.31 billion.

Congressional Initiative to Increase ECF Funding:

With ECF funding currently capped at \$7.15 billion, insufficient to fund all applications submitted in the third window, Senators Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), and Representative Grace Meng (D-NY) sent a [letter](#) to the Democratic leadership (Chuck Schumer

(D-NY) and Nancy Pelosi (D-Calf.) last week urging support to secure additional ECF funding. Although the letter was partisan, it does indicate broad support for a much-needed extension of the ECF program. The letter was cosigned by twenty-two other Democratic senators and forty-four other Democratic representatives including Representatives Alma Adams and Kathy Manning from North Carolina. We encourage schools and libraries to write their Congressional representatives — Democratic or Republican — in support of this effort.

Congress Extends Free Meal Provisions for the Summer

In a welcome bipartisan move, sure to be signed by the President, Congress approved the extension of free meals for students and other food assistance through the end of the summer. The free meal provisions had been scheduled to expire June 30th. The [Keep Kids Fed Act of 2022](#) will:

- Extend flexibilities for summer meals in 2022. This will make it easier to feed all students during the summer months, particularly those in rural areas, through flexible options like meal delivery and grab-and-go.
- Extend school meal program administrative and paperwork flexibilities through the 2022-2023 school year.
- Increase the reimbursement rate for school lunch and school breakfast to help offset the increased cost of food and operating expenses for schools. Schools will receive an additional 40 cents more for each lunch and 15 cents more for each breakfast served.
- Help daycare centers and home providers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program offset increased costs by providing an additional 10 cents per meal and streamlining reimbursement rates.

What the Act does not do is to extend free meals for all students through the 2022-2023 school year. This means that schools participating in the reinstated National School Lunch Program (“NSLP”) — not in the Community Eligibility Program (“CEP”) — will again have to collect NSLP applications from qualifying families. This may prove burdensome, hence less effective, for schools that have been relieved of this requirement during the preceding COVID years. From an E-rate perspective, this means:

- Lower NSLP application collection rates may result in lower E-rate discounts for schools that had historically reported NSLP percentages in the lower ranges of the E-rate discount bands.
- State collection and reporting of NSLP percentages may not be readily available until late in 2022 or early in 2023. Schools will have to make a concerted effort to update their EPC profiles with student enrollment and NSLP data during the Administrative Window before USAC locks those profiles during the FY 2023 application process.
- Schools not participating in either the NSLP or CEP programs may have to resort to family income surveys to document their NSLP eligibility percentages. Sample income survey forms, in both English and Spanish, are available in the [Forms Rack](#) section on the E-Rate Central website.

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

June 30	Reply comments due on the FCC’s Notice of Inquiry regarding the prevention and elimination of digital discrimination (FCC 22-21).						
July 1	Form 486 deadline for FY 2021 covering funding committed in Wave 47. More generally, the Form 486 deadline is 120 days from the FCDL date or from the service start date (typically July 1 st), whichever is later. Upcoming Form 486 deadlines are: <table><tr><td>Wave 48</td><td>07/08/2022</td></tr><tr><td>Wave 49</td><td>07/15/2022</td></tr><tr><td>Wave 50</td><td>07/22/2022</td></tr></table>	Wave 48	07/08/2022	Wave 49	07/15/2022	Wave 50	07/22/2022
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July 15	The FCC will formally decommission the legacy Commission Registration System (“CORES”). To register for, or update, an FCC Registration Number, users must use the current CORES version (designated “CORES2”) that has been in use since 2016 (see DA 22-508).						
July 21	USAC invoice training session (register).						
September 9	Last day of the “Summer Deferral” window giving applicants additional time to respond to PIA E-rate inquiries. No such deferral period is in effect for ECF inquiries.						

FCC/IMLS Agreement to Promote Broadband:

The FCC and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (“IMLS”) [announced](#) a Memorandum of Understanding (“[MOU](#)”) to jointly promote public awareness of federal funding opportunities for broadband including E-rate and ECF. The joint effort will include commitments to:

- Share data about participation in the FCC’s E-Rate and Emergency Connectivity Fund programs, IMLS’ grant programs and availability of high-speed broadband services.
- Publicize information about federal broadband funding opportunities and resources available through the Parties’ respective outreach channels.
- Partner on the development of broadband-related outreach materials and events.
- Explore users’ experiences and technical assistance needs related to federal broadband funding opportunities.
- Expand and leverage the use of mobile services and other points of access.
- Connect underserved communities to digital resources and services.

USAC ECF Newsletter Dated June 21 — Same as Last Week

[USAC’s Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter of June 21, 2022](#), does not contain any new information that was not included in previous ECF newsletters.

USAC E-Rate News Brief Dated June 23 – Multiple Topics

[USAC’s Schools and Libraries News Brief of June 23, 2022](#), discusses the following topics:

- As of last Friday, and in preparation for the deployment of the FY 2023 Form 470 on July 1st, any incomplete and/or uncertified FY 2022 Form 470s will have been removed from EPC.
- Applicants not able to complete special construction projects this month must file a service delivery deadline extension request by June 30th.
- The Form 486 early certification — the first option in the list of Form 486 certifications — can be used when filing a Form 486 for approved FY 2022 funding requests for services that have not yet been started but will start by July 31st.
- The FCC will formally decommission the legacy Commission Registration System (“CORES”) on July 15th. To register for, or update, an FCC Registration Number, users must use the [current CORES version](#) (designated “CORES2”) that has been in use since 2016 (see [DA 22-508](#)).
- As part of a security update to the EPC terms and conditions, USAC inadvertently sent notifications to EPC account administrators for active and deactivated EPC users who had never accepted the original terms and conditions. This resulted in previously deactivated users being added back into EPC accounts. We understand that these additions will be automatically resolved within the month or can be proactively deactivated again by the account administrators.

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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