- Funding Status for E-Rate and ECF
    - E-Rate for FY 2023
    - E-Rate for FY 2022
    - ECF for 2021-2023
- Updates and Reminders
    - Upcoming Dates
    - Funds For Learning's 13th Annual E-rate Survey

- USAC E-Rate Special Edition News Brief of April 6 — Invoice Systems Consolidation

Funding Status for E-Rate and ECF

E-Rate for FY 2023:

The Form 471 application window for FY 2023 closed Tuesday, March 28th. USAC has not yet released preliminary demand statistics, but a download from Open Data shows the following demand levels including $91.8 million for North Carolina.

Cat. 1	$ 1,654,170,302
Cat. 2	1,285,752,333
Total	$ 2,939,922,635

Many FY 2023 applications have already been reviewed, are currently categorized as "Wave Ready," and are likely to be funded when USAC begins the FY 2023 funding waves later this month.

E-Rate for FY 2022:

Wave 51 for FY 2022 was issued on Thursday, April 6th, for $58 thousand (for one Head Start in Maryland). By far, this was the smallest wave yet for FY 2022 — a strong indication that USAC has completed all but the most problematic applications for the current funding year. Nationwide, USAC has funded 98.6% of the FY 2022 applications representing 96.8% of the requested funding. Cumulative FY 2022 commitments to date are $2.86 billion including 71.1 million for North Carolina.

ECF for 2021-2023:

Total commitments for all three ECF windows are $6.62 billion including 189 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has funded 86.2% of the ECF applications representing 67.6% of the requested funding. Window 3 applications are being funded down to the 65% rural band. Total disbursements as reported on March 31st were $3.01 billion.

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

April 11	Critical date for applicants who missed the March 28th Form 471 deadline and who plan to file late "Out-of-Window" applications for FY 2023. The FCC has traditionally approved waivers for late applications filed within 14 days of the initial deadline.
April 14	The Form 486 deadline for FY 2022 Wave 35. 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 36	04/21/2023
Wave 37	04/28/2023
Wave 38	05/05/2023
Wave 39	05/12/2023

April 24	Due date for submitting comments on the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 23-10) to further improve E-rate program rules and encourage greater Tribal participation (and potentially other small applicants) in the E-rate program (see our newsletter of February 6th). Reply comments are due by May 23rd.
May 8	Due date for submitting comments on the USDA's proposed change to expand CEP participation by lowering the ISP threshold from 40% to 25% (see our newsletter of March 27th).

Funds For Learning's 13th Annual E-Rate Survey:

For over a decade, Funds For Learning ("FFL") has been conducting an annual 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 2022 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 about the 2023 survey:

- It should take less than 10 minutes to complete.
- Survey results are completely confidential. Only aggregate data is reported.
- 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.

USAC E-Rate Special Edition News Brief of April 6 — Invoice Systems Consolidation

USAC's E-Rate Special Edition News Brief dated April 6, 2023, discusses USAC's plan to consolidate the historically separate BEAR and SPI invoicing systems into the E-Rate Productivity Center ("EPC"). The consolidation is expected to take place in the May/June timeframe. Prior to this occurring, USAC will announce the last date to submit invoices within the legacy system and the first date to begin submitting invoices within EPC. In the interim, invoice submissions will be paused — hopefully only for a few days (unspecified) — to ensure a successful transition.

As a preliminary transitional step, USAC has already migrated user invoicing permissions from the legacy BEAR and SPI invoicing systems into EPC. EPC Account Administrators are encouraged to review assigned BEAR (for applicants) and SPI (for suppliers) user permissions to make sure that the correct users have access to prepare and/or certify invoices.

Once invoicing is transitioned to EPC, the following changes will be noticed:

- Notifications about invoice submission statuses will be delivered to the users' News Feeds.
- USAC inquiries about submitted invoices will be made available through EPC. User replies, including attached documentation, will also be made through EPC.
- Invoicing for FY 2015 and earlier years **cannot** be handled through EPC. Users needing to submit invoices for these earlier funding years are advised to file customer services cases (through EPC) to request instructions for handling such invoices.

The News Brief also provides instructions for applicants and service providers logging into EPC for the first time, reviewing EPC invoice permissions, and updating Account Administrator information (if needed).