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Funding Status for E-Rate and ECF

E-Rate for FY 2023:

USAC issued Wave 12 for FY 2023 on Thursday, July 13th, for \$41.5 million including \$1.19 million for ten North Carolina applicants. Total funding is now \$1.62 billion including \$56.7 million for North Carolina. . At this point, USAC has already funded 85.9% of the originally submitted applications representing 54.6% of the dollars requested.

ECF for 2021-2023:

Wave 29 for Window 3 was [issued](#) on Wednesday, July 12th, for \$13.9 million including \$1.68 million for one North Carolina district. Total commitments for all three ECF windows are \$6.76 billion including \$192 million for North Carolina. USAC has funded 89.5% of the ECF applications representing 68.7% of the requested funding.

Window 3 applications are being funded down to the 50% urban band but could go lower if more funding becomes available. We encourage all applicants, which have been funded beyond their actual needs, to file Post-Commitment Requests (“PCRs”) to reduce their funding commitments and free up dollars for other needy ECF applicants.

Learn Without Limits, Part III — Cybersecurity Pilot

Earlier this month, at the American Library Association’s national convention, FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel [announced](#) her intention to propose a “Learn Without Limits” initiative. If adopted, this initiative would make Wi-Fi on school buses and the loan of hotspots eligible for E-rate support (see our [newsletter of July 3rd](#)). Last week, in a speech before the School Superintendents Association (“AASA”) and the Association of School Business Officers, (“ASBO”) the Chairwoman expanded upon her Learn Without Limits plan by proposing a three-year, \$200 million, pilot cybersecurity program. As proposed, the pilot would be funded within the Universal Service Fund but separate from the E-rate program.

The pilot program proposal follows an FCC [notice](#) issued last December seeking public comment on whether to add advanced firewalls or other network security services as E-rate eligible services. Details of the proposed pilot have not yet been disclosed and would be subject to further comment

in a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. Interestingly, however, the pilot appears similar in scope to an earlier proposal put forth by Funds For Learning (“FFL”) and cited in last December’s notice for a three-year program to fund advanced firewalls and services including the following capabilities: intrusion prevention and detection (“IPS/IDS”); VPN; distributed denial-of-service (“DDoS”) protection; and network access control (“NAC”). FFL further proposed that in the event demand exceeds available funds — a likely case if funding is limited to \$200 million over three years — that pilot funding be prioritized to the applicants with the highest discount rates.

Funding for the proposed pilot is interesting. As indicated in the FCC’s press release, the \$200 million pilot program would be established “within the Universal Service Fund, but separate from the E-Rate program, to ensure gains in enhanced cybersecurity don’t come at a cost of undermining E-Rate’s success in promoting digital equity.” Coincidentally — perhaps — in a [Public Notice](#) released last May, the FCC noted that USAC had projected that \$440.22 million in unused funds were available for use in E-rate funding for FY 2023. The FCC directed USAC to use only \$250 million of the unused funds for FY 2023 but to reserve the remaining amount — \$190.22 million — for “future use.” The \$200 million cybersecurity pilot may already have been largely funded.

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

July 20 The FCC’s monthly open meeting includes a vote on changes to the E-rate rules to make it easier for tribal libraries to apply. It also seeks further comment on ways to simplify the application process for all E-rate applicants (see [draft order](#) and our [newsletter of July 3rd](#)). A [live webcast](#) of the meeting will be available.

July 21 The Form 486 deadline for FY 2022 Wave 49. 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 50	07/28/2023
Wave 51	08/04/2023
Wave 52	08/11/2023
Wave 53	08/18/2023

The first Form 486 deadline for FY 2023, for FCDLs issued on or before July 1st — normally October 29th (which is a Sunday this year) — will be Monday, October 30, 2023.

July 27 USAC Form 470 webinar (details to follow).

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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