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Funding Status for E-Rate and ECF

E-Rate for FY 2023:

USAC issued Wave 48 for FY 2023 on Thursday, March 21st, for \$1.65 million, none for North Carolina. funding is now \$2.60 billion including \$84.7 million for North Carolina. At this point, USAC has funded 98.0% of the originally submitted applications representing 93.7% of the dollars requested.

ECF for 2021-2023:

Total commitments for all three ECF windows are \$6.47 billion including \$192 million for North Carolina.

E-Rate for FY 2024:

The Form 471 filing window for FY 2024 closes this Wednesday, March 27th, at 11:59 p.m. EDT. As of last weekend, USAC had received 25,564 certified applications for FY 2024 requesting \$1.80 billion. Those reviewed and marked “Wave Ready” are expected to be included in the first funding wave for FY 2024 in late April.

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

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| March 27 | Close of the Form 471 application window for FY 2024. To be considered as “In Window,” Form 471s must be filed and certified by 11:59 p.m. EDT. |
| March 29 | Form 486 deadline for FY 2023 Wave 32. 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: |

	Wave 33	04/05/2024
	Wave 34	04/12/2024
April 18	USAC webinar on Program Integrity Assurance (“PIA”) and Selective Reviews (registration).	
June 30	Last day to receive FY 2023 recurring services and all ECF Window 3 services.	
August 29	Invoice deadline for ECF Window 3 applications.	

FCC Issues Section 706 Report:

Under Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the FCC is required to issue periodic reports as to whether “advanced telecommunications capability is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion.” Last week, the FCC released its first Section 706 Report ([FCC 24-27](#)) following the enactment of, and broadband funding provided by, the Infrastructure Act. Key aspects of the report included the adoption of:

- A new, “long-overdue,” benchmark for defining advanced telecommunications capability for fixed broadband of 100 Mbps download speed paired with 20 Mbps upload speed. The previous standard was 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up.
- A long-term fixed broadband speed goal of 1 Gbps download speed paired with 500 Mbps upload speed.

On E-rate related matters, the Report:

- Included an updated short-term broadband goal for schools of 1 Gbps for every 1,000 students and staff (previously 100 Mbps per 1,000)
- Agreed that “students’ access to broadband at home is an important goal.” As such, the Report states that the FCC is “currently considering our proposal to modify the E-Rate program to better meet the needs of off-premises students, school staff, and library patrons” — the latter “proposal” referring to the FCC’s pending action to make hotspots eligible for E-rate funding.
- Referenced a proposal, dormant since late 2021, “to implement a central document repository through which service providers would be required to submit bids to the E-Rate program administrator, USAC, instead of directly to applicants.”

ACP Set to Shut Down in May:

Although there is still widespread Congressional support to provide additional funding to keep the ACP program going through the end of the calendar year, the prospects for such funding appear bleak. Most specifically, ACP funding is not included in Congress’ FY 2024 appropriations “minibus” package. Meanwhile, the FCC continues to implement its ACP shut down plan. Having already announced that April will be the last month in which ACP can be fully funded, the FCC issued a [public notice](#) last week estimating the maximum reimbursement range — 23% to 53% — that can be expected for ACP benefits in the last month of May.

FCC Approves PIA Procedures for FY 2024:

The FCC has [notified](#) USAC that it has approved USAC’s PIA procedures for the review of FY 2024 Form 471 applications. Given that USAC has been reviewing Form 471s since the opening of the application window, this is a formality that will permit USAC to issue Funding Commitment Decision Letters (“FCDLs”) after the close of the window. The procedures themselves are considered proprietary and are not available for public review. With the exception of new procedures dealing with school bus Wi-Fi applications, we would expect few, if any, other procedural changes for FY 2024.

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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