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Funding Status

E-Rate for FY 2024:

Wave 3 for FY 2024 was released on Thursday, May 9th, for $53.0 million including $2.87 million for 15 North Carolina applicants. Total funding, as of Wave 3, is $1.18 billion including $48.6 million for North Carolina. At this early point, USAC has already funded 65.5% of the originally submitted applications representing 38.1% of the dollars requested.

E-Rate for FY 2023:

Wave 54 for FY 2023 was released on Friday, May 10th, for $30.6 million, none for North Carolina. Total funding is $2.62 billion including $84.6 million for North Carolina. At this point, USAC has funded 98.2% of the originally submitted applications representing 95.9% of the dollars requested.

SPACs Required for Invoicing – Warnings

Warning #1: USAC will not pay any invoice — neither BEAR nor SPI — unless the associated service provider has properly filed their Form 473, the Service Provider Annual Certification ("SPAC") for that funding year. At this time of the year, applicants may want to confirm the SPAC status of their service providers for two reasons:

1. Applicants planning to file BEAR reimbursements for a full year of recurring FY 2023 services will shortly be receiving bills for the twelfth month. Before filing those BEARs, applicants should make sure that their service providers have current SPACs on file. The good news at this point in time is that all but a small percentage of active suppliers have filed FY 2023 SPACs.
2. That is not the case for FY 2024. As of last week, by our count, almost 40% of the suppliers had yet to file SPACs for the coming year. This will be particularly important for applicants who expect their suppliers to begin discounting their recurring service bills using the SPI process as of July.

Warning #2: It used to be easy to check the SPAC status of any supplier for any funding year. In the Tools section of the USAC website; simply input the provider's SPIN in the Service Provider Download Tool and click "Search."

The resulting display lists all the funding years, displayed numerically, for which that service provider has already filed a SPAC.

At least it is supposed to list every year for which a SPAC was filed. Unfortunately, we are finding that the tool is apparently not being updated for SPACs filed for FY 2024.

To see accurate data on FY 2024 SPACs requires a deep dive into USAC's Open Data files, specifically the E-Rate Request for Discount on Services: FRN Status file. For each FRN row, columns 25-27 show the service provider name, the current SPAC status for that year ("Yes" or "No"), and the SPIN.

If you do not want to download the entire data file to find the SPAC status for a single SPIN, you can pre-filter the file for the funding year and the SPIN. For example, to find the FY 2024 SPAC status for SPIN 1430001432, use the following filter combination:

The resulting display will show only the FRNs associated with that supplier with the SPAC data displayed in the same columns and duplicated on each FRN row.

USAC appears to be on a path to phase out or restructure many of its historic funding tools in favor of more detailed — but unfortunately less user-friendly — database tools. The newer Open Data sets are more powerful but come with a steep learning curve for occasional-use applicants.

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

May 14-15   Approximate date that funding is expected to run out for the Affordable Connectivity Program ("ACP") that has been providing discounted internet service to low-income households. Efforts are still underway in Congress to provide additional funding for a modified program. Disruptions, at this point, appear unavoidable.

May 17   Form 486 deadline for FY 2023 Wave 39. 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 40	05/24/2024
Wave 41	05/31/2024
Wave 42	06/07/2024
Wave 43	06/14/2024

May 28   Extended invoice deadline for FY 2022 non-recurring service FRNs.

June 30	Last day to receive FY 2023 recurring services.
June 30	Last day to light fiber (or request an extension) for special construction projects from FY 2023.
June 30	Last day to receive ECF Window 3 services; all equipment must be received by this date.
August 29	Invoice deadline for ECF Window 3 applications.