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Funding Status

E-Rate for FY 2025:

Wave 32 of Funding Commitment Decision Letters (“FCDLs”) for FY 2025 was released on Wednesday, November 26th, for \$30.6 million, none for North Carolina. Total funding for FY 2025 is \$2.40 billion, including \$53.2 million for North Carolina. Currently, USAC has funded 92.8% of submitted applications, representing 80.6% of the dollars requested.

Cybersecurity Pilot Program:

The Form 471 application window for the Cybersecurity Pilot Program closed on September 15, 2025. Total pilot funding is capped at \$200 million for 690 applicants, including \$7.9 million for fifteen North Carolina applicants. PIA review of Pilot applications is continuing, with some applications already reported to be “Wave Ready.” Issuance of the first Funding Commitment Decisions Letters (“FCDLs”) will require FCC review and should begin shortly — hopefully later this month.

Proposed Legislation to Restore SNAP

The budget reconciliation law, H.R. 1, the “One Big Beautiful Bill” is designed to implement sweeping reductions — approximately \$287 billion over ten years — in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”) by tightening eligibility criteria. The bill is estimated to reduce the number of families eligible for SNAP benefits by millions.

As first discussed in our [Newsletter of November 3rd](#), reduced family participation in SNAP would, in turn and over time, reduce school-reported Identified Student Percentage (“ISP”) ratios, the major criteria affecting participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (“CEP”) program. Lower ISP ratios would have a direct impact on the number of schools eligible for CEP. This would have a potentially rippling effect on school discount rates in two ways.

1. For schools remaining eligible for CEP, ISP ratios determine the schools’ National School Lunch Program (“NSLP”) percentages, the key determinant of E-Rate discount rates. NSLP percentages are currently calculated at 1.6 times the ISP ratios (assuming the

United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) maintains that multiplier). Lower ISPs will, in some cases, drop schools into a lower discount rate band.

2. Worse still, lower ISP ratios may disqualify some schools from CEP altogether. Should this occur, the schools would have no choice other than to return to the time-consuming process of collection NSLP forms to calculate their discount rate-determining NSLP percentages.

To offset these changes, we urge potentially affected applicants to get behind and support a bill introduced in the House on November 18th by Representative Jahana Hayes (D, CT) to restore the SNAP cuts. The proposed bill, entitled the [Restoring Food Security for American Families and Farmers Act of 2025](#), is currently cosponsored by 193 representatives (including two from North Carolina). One simple way to encourage both representatives and senators to support this effort is to use the [FRAC Action Network](#), a Congressional system maintained by the Food Research & Action Center (“FRAC”).

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

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|-------------|--|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|
| December 2 | USAC webinar on the EPC Administrative Window (register). | | | | | | |
| December 3 | USAC webinar on Eligible Services 101 (register). | | | | | | |
| December 3 | Due date for reply comments on the FY 2026 Eligible Service List. | | | | | | |
| December 5 | FY 2025 Form 486 deadline for applicants funded in Wave 16. More generally, the Form 486 deadline is 120 days after the FCDL date, or the Service Start Date (typically July 1 st), whichever is later. The next Form 486 deadlines for FY 2025 are:
<table><tbody><tr><td>Wave 17</td><td>12/12/2025</td></tr><tr><td>Wave 18</td><td>12/19/2025</td></tr><tr><td>Wave 19</td><td>12/29/2025</td></tr></tbody></table> | Wave 17 | 12/12/2025 | Wave 18 | 12/19/2025 | Wave 19 | 12/29/2025 |
| Wave 17 | 12/12/2025 | | | | | | |
| Wave 18 | 12/19/2025 | | | | | | |
| Wave 19 | 12/29/2025 | | | | | | |
| December 17 | Senate Commerce Committee’s FCC oversight meeting with testimony from all three Commissioners. Questioning is expected to focus on Commission actions related to public broadcasting programming and licenses (potentially interesting, but unrelated to E-Rate). | | | | | | |

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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