North Carolina E-Rate Forum

Weekly E-Rate Newsletter
Vol. 11, No. 46 November 13, 2017

- Funding Status – FY 2017
- Reply Comments on the FCC's Category 2 Public Notice
- Updates on USAC's E-Rate Productivity Center and Legacy System
  - 2017 Hurricane Relief Entities Report – Under Development
- E-Rate Updates and Reminders
  - Upcoming 2017 E-Rate Dates
  - Awaiting Formal Guidance on Form 470 Internet Options
  - Schools & Libraries Leadership Change
  - Hurricane Relief Updates
  - USAC Fall E-Rate Training
- USAC News Brief Dated November 10 – Service Start Date Reminder

Funding Status – FY 2017

Wave 24 for FY 2017 was released Friday, November 10th, for a total of $41.4 million. Funding for North Carolina was $697 thousand for 4 applicants. Cumulative national funding through Wave 24 is $1.72 billion, including $53.1 million for North Carolina. Wave 25 is scheduled to be released on Friday, November 17th.

By our calculations, USAC has now processed and issued FCDLs on over 90% of the FY 2017 applications, and over 60% of the dollar value of those applications.

Reply Comments on the FCC's Category 2 Public Notice

Reply comments were submitted on the FCC's Public Notice (DA 17-921) regarding the ongoing level, structure, and application processing of Category 2 ("C2") funding. As with the initial comments, there was strong support for continuing, if not increasing, funding for Category 2. Many of the comments also supported the move to district-wide or system-wide (rather than per-building) budgeting.

The following links to specific comments are worth reviewing:

AASA (The School Superintendents Association)
Alliance for Excellent Education Council of the Great City Schools
CSM Consulting
EdLiNC (Education & Libraries Networks Coalition)
E-Rate Central
Urban Libraries Council
US Educational Technology Purchasing Alliance (NC)

© 2017 E-Rate Central

As a part of this proceeding, the Consortium for School Networking ("CoSN") submitted its 2017 Annual Infrastructure Survey Report. The ten findings of the report are:

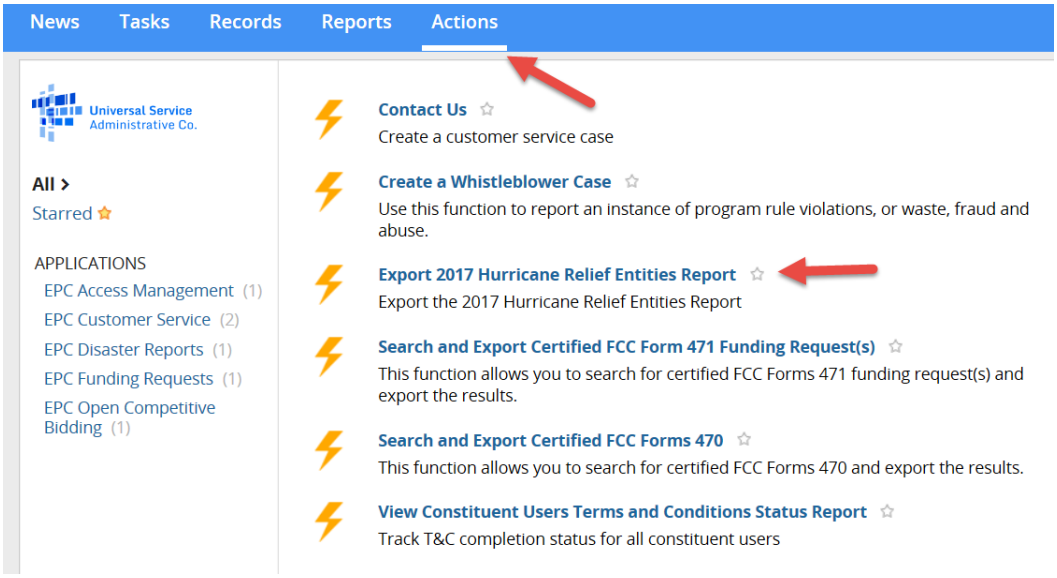
1. The cost of monthly, recurring ongoing expenses is the most significant barrier to increasing connectivity, for five years running.
2. The vast majority of districts (85%) report that all their schools meet the short-term FCC broadband connectivity goal. There are still 4% of districts where none of their schools meet that goal.
3. Forty-seven percent (47%) of districts have at least some schools meeting the long-term broadband connectivity goal with only a small minority of districts, 16%, achieving the long-term goal in all their schools. For the majority of districts, 53%, none of their schools meet the long-term goal.
4. There is significant progress in lowering the price of broadband in most school districts. For the first time, survey results show less than a tenth of districts are paying $50/Mbps or more for their Internet or WAN.
5. Software as a service (SaaS) is an accepted practice in districts, with 94% of respondents indicating that they use some type of Cloud-based software system.
6. The overwhelming reason why districts are moving to the cloud is to avoid "time-intensive installation/maintenance of software," with 82% of districts indicating that is the case.
7. Rural districts comprise nearly 60% of all districts that receive one or no bids for broadband services.
8. A third of districts (34%) don't use consortia for E-rate purchases even though available—twice as many as last year's 17%.
9. School systems are spending more and more on security – nearly half (45%) spend more than 10 percent of their budget on network security. This marks an increase from 19 percent of school districts in 2016.
10. More than a third of districts continue to experience one day or more of unplanned network downtime every year. The percentage has remained essentially unchanged since 2014.

Updates on USAC's E-Rate Productivity Center and Legacy System

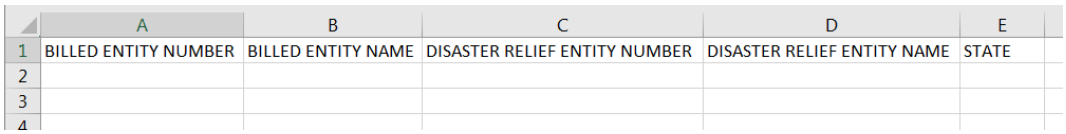
2017 Hurricane Relief Entities Report – Under Development:

Current updates on the hurricane relief efforts for affected schools and libraries are discussed in the E-Rate Updates and Reminders section below.

Additionally, USAC is apparently working on creating a list of entities eligible for hurricane relief that will be made available through EPC. The list — blank as of Sunday — will be accessed by following links from the EPC Actions tab.



The list, generated as a Task, will be in the following spreadsheet form. It suggests that entities eligible for relief will get assigned new entity names and numbers to track their new FY 2017 relief applications.



	A	B	C	D	E
1	BILLED ENTITY NUMBER	BILLED ENTITY NAME	DISASTER RELIEF ENTITY NUMBER	DISASTER RELIEF ENTITY NAME	STATE
2					
3					
4					

E-Rate Updates and Reminders

Upcoming 2017 E-Rate Dates:

November 13 — Form 486 deadline for FY 2017 funding committed in Wave 7. Upcoming FY 2017 Form 486 deadlines in November include:

Wave 8	11/20/2017
Wave 9	11/27/2017

Applicants missing these (or earlier) deadlines should watch carefully for "Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letters" in EPC. The Reminders will afford applicants with 15-day extensions to submit their Form 486s without penalty.

November 13 — Second FY 2017 Emergency Hurricane Application Window opens for Directly Impacted Applicants and Indirectly Impacted Schools.

December 13 — Second FY 2017 Emergency Hurricane Application Window closes.

Awaiting Formal Guidance on Form 470 Internet Options:

Status: Pending.

As discussed in our newsletter of November 6th, USAC guidance on the proper Form 470 menu options to use when applying for fiber-based Internet services continues to evolve, albeit without any published updates. For now, our best advice is as follows:

- Always include the "Leased Lit Fiber" option, whether or not transport is required.
- Use of either the "Internet Access & Transport Bundled" or "Internet Access: ISP Service Only" option, as appropriate (the only two options that actually mention "Internet") is highly recommended.
- Use the "Narrative" section to fully describe what you really want. Better yet, upload a detailed RFP.

Schools & Libraries Leadership Change:

USAC released a Special Edition News Brief on November 7th announcing the transition of Craig Davis from VP of the Schools and Libraries Division ("SLD") to VP of USAC's Procurement and Strategic Sourcing. Stepping in to head the SLD as the Acting VP is Catriona Ayer, previously the Senior Director of the SLD's Program Management and the SLD's most experienced executive.

Hurricane Relief Updates:

USAC released a second Special Edition News Brief on November 9th summarizing the special rules recently adopted by the FCC to provide emergency relief for E-rate applicants adversely affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria (see our newsletter of November 6th).

USAC's regular Friday News Brief, referenced below, includes the following updates:

- Links to a new Hurricane Relief website and to related Frequently Asked Questions.
- Announcement of a webinar on the subject this Monday, November 13th.

USAC Fall E-Rate Training:

USAC's annual fall training sessions have been held in Charlotte, Minneapolis, and Washington DC. Presentation slides for the trainings are available online. This season's final training workshop will be held November 14th in Portland, OR.

USAC News Brief Dated November 10 – Service Start Date Reminder

USAC's Schools and Libraries News Brief of November 10, 2017 reminds applicants and service providers that Service Start Dates ("SSDs") on E-rate forms cannot be before July 1 of the associated funding year — even if program rules permit installation to begin beforehand. The service itself cannot begin until the funding year is underway.

An additional discussion of the SSD rule is available in our newsletter of November 6th.

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 the SLD, 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.

For further information, follow E-Rate Central on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

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.

In compliance with federal law, the NC Department of Public Instruction administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.