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Funding Status – FY 2020

Wave 17 for FY 2020 was released on Thursday, August 27th for a total of $59.7 million including $1.68 million for 15 North Carolina applicants. Cumulative commitments are $1.45 billion including $38.0 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has now funded 85% of the FY 2020 applications representing 52% of the requested funding.

SECA and SHLB Support Additional COVID-19 E-Rate Measures

Earlier this month (see our newsletter of August 10th), the State E-Rate Coordinators' Alliance ("SECA") urged the FCC to fund additional Internet bandwidth and to extend the gift rule waiver throughout FY 2020. These requests were quickly supported by the American Library Association ("ALA"), the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition ("SHLB"), the Consortium for School Networking ("CoSN"), and the State Educational Technology Directors Association ("SETDA").

Last week, in a conference call with the staff of the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau, SECA and SHLB jointly discussed their requests to provide additional broadband support both on- and off-campus during the pandemic (see SECA/SHLB *ex parte* letter of August 25th).

As a follow-up to this discussion, SECA submitted a supplemental analysis to the FCC estimating the need for an additional $69-103 million in E-rate support for expanded Internet services over and above approved and still pending applications for FY 2020. SECA's analysis was based on survey responses from more than 350 schools across 20 states indicating requirements for 10-15% increases in Internet expenditures, some of which have already been incurred.

SHLB, for its part, submitted an additional ex parte letter supporting the emergency measures to allow schools and libraries to obtain E-rate support for immediate bandwidth increases necessary to handle the growth of online learning. In addition to increased funding for FY 2020, both SECA and SHLB stressed the need for the FCC to adopt a streamlined process to obtain the additional E-rate support without going through the traditional competitive bidding process. SHLB also asked the FCC to adopt similar measures for Rural Healthcare participants to support the expansion of telehealth services.

E-Rate Central continues to support SECA's and SHLB's call for additional emergency E-rate funding during the COVID-19 crisis.

E-Rate Updates and Reminders

Upcoming E-Rate Dates:

September 4	Deadline for submitting reply comments on the FCC's draft ESL for FY 2021 (DA 20-767) (see our newsletter of July 27th).
October 12	Nomination deadline for six USAC Board members including one school representative.

USAC News Brief Dated August 28 – Reminders on Extended Program Deadlines

USAC's Schools and Libraries News Brief of August 28, 2020, reminds applicants and service providers of the FCC's April COVID-19 Order (DA 20-364) extending many of the E-rate program deadlines. Specifically, USAC notes:

- The one-year waiver of service delivery deadlines for non-recurring services and special construction.
- The extended deadline for filing appeals and/or requests for waivers.
- The automatic extension of invoice deadlines.
- The extended procedural deadline for filing Form 486s.
- The extended timeframe for responding to USAC and PIA information requests.

Last week's News Brief also indicates that USAC has noticed a number of line item denials of BEAR and SPI invoices due to incorrect dates in the "Customer Billed Date" and/or "Shipping Date" fields. The News Brief reviews the meaning of both fields and reminds filers that only one date field should be utilized for each line item.