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## Funding Status – FY 2020 and FY 2021

### *FY 2020:*

Wave 45 for FY 2020 was released on Thursday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, for a total of \$20.1 million including \$587 thousand for two North Carolina applicants. Cumulative commitments are \$2.265 billion including \$73.2 million for North Carolina. Nationwide, USAC has now funded 97% of the FY 2020 applications representing 83% of the requested funding.

### *FY 2021:*

The FY 2021 Form 471 application window will close on Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, at 11:59 p.m. EDT. Applicants who missed the February 25<sup>th</sup> Form 470 deadline (or the invoice deadline on the same day) should read [USAC's Schools and Libraries News Brief of February 26, 2021](#).

## Emergency Broadband Benefit Program Update

The FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit ("EBB") Order ([FCC 21-29](#)), as discussed in our [newsletter of March 1<sup>st</sup>](#), set a tight time schedule for the program's implementation. To begin offering discounts on internet services for low-income families by late April, internet service providers ("ISPs") must formally elect to participate in the program. Moving quickly, the FCC issued a Public Notice ([DA 21-265](#)) last week establishing open dates and deadlines for provider application and election notices.

Eligible Telecommunications Companies ("ETCs") are automatically approved for the EBB and need only elect to participate. Last week's Public Notice announced that the inbox for "Provider Election Notices" will open on the USAC website on March 11<sup>th</sup>.

Non-ETCs must first be approved to participate before filing their "Election Notices." The Public Notice indicated that the "Non-ETC Provider Application & Alternative Eligibility Verification Process Portal" will open on the FCC website March 8<sup>th</sup> with a filing deadline of March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Schools and libraries seeking to promote and/or participate in the EBB program on behalf of their students or patrons should review the [EBB strategy memoranda](#)<sup>1</sup> prepared by E-Rate Central. Note that the timetable set forth in the FCC’s first Public Notice highlights the importance of reaching out to determine local ISP participation in the EBB program as soon as possible.

## E-Rate Updates and Reminders

### *Upcoming E-Rate Dates:*

- |          |   |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |
|----------|---|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|
| March 12 | Form 486 deadline for FY 2020 covering funding committed in Wave 29. More generally, the Form 486 deadline is 120 days from the FCDL date or the service start date (typically July 1 <sup>st</sup> ), whichever is later. Upcoming Form 486 deadlines are: <table><tr><td>Wave 30</td><td>03/19/2021</td></tr><tr><td>Wave 31</td><td>03/25/2021</td></tr><tr><td>Wave 32</td><td>04/02/2021</td></tr><tr><td>Wave 33</td><td>04/09/2021</td></tr><tr><td>Wave 34</td><td>04/16/2021</td></tr></table> | Wave 30 | 03/19/2021 | Wave 31 | 03/25/2021 | Wave 32 | 04/02/2021 | Wave 33 | 04/09/2021 | Wave 34 | 04/16/2021 |
| Wave 30  | 03/19/2021  |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |
| Wave 31  | 03/25/2021  |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |
| Wave 32  | 04/02/2021  |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |
| Wave 33  | 04/09/2021  |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |
| Wave 34  | 04/16/2021  |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |
| March 22 | “Non-ETC Provider Application & Alternative Eligibility Verification” filing deadline for ISPs seeking to participate in the EBB program (see article above).   |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |
| March 25 | The FY 2021 Form 471 application window will close at 11:59 p.m. EDT.   |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |         |            |

### *Senate Approves COVID Relief Bill with E-Rate Support:*

The U.S. Senate approved a \$1.9 billion COVID relief bill last Saturday presumably containing the equivalent \$7.6 billion [E-rate funding provision](#) for off-campus broadband internet services as was contained in the House version approved the previous week (see our [newsletter of March 1<sup>st</sup>](#)). This sets up final congressional approval by the House expected later this week so that the bill can be sent to President Biden for his signature. Implementation will require action by the FCC.

## USAC News Brief Dated March 5 – Reminders on Evaluating Bids

[USAC’s Schools and Libraries News Brief of March 5, 2021](#), provides the following reminders on evaluating bids:

- Construct a bid evaluation matrix giving the highest weight to the price of eligible products and services. In addition to [USAC’s sample bid evaluation matrix](#), see E-Rate Central’s Excel-based [Bid Responses Assessments](#) workbook.
- Any reasons for disqualifying bids must have been stated in your Form 470 and/or RFP (preferably both).

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<sup>1</sup> E-Rate Central’s EBB strategy memos are based solely on our interpretation of the FCC’s initial EBB Order. We expect the Order to be supplemented with additional FCC and USAC notices and clarifications.

- If you receive one or no bids, you can keep your competitive bidding process open and solicit additional bids. If no bids, or only one bid, is ultimately received, that fact should be documented.
- Accepted bid(s), even if only one bid is received for a given service, must be cost-effective.
- Service providers selected must have a valid Service Provider Identification Number (“SPIN”). Applications submitted during the last two weeks of the window may utilize an “interim SPIN.”
- Retention of bidding information is important to document compliance with the E-rate competitive bidding rules.

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*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](mailto:join-ncerate@lists.dpi.state.nc.us). Please include your name, organization, telephone, and e-mail address.*

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