



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU AND OFFICE OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR DEFER CHANGES TO FCC FORM 470 TO MINIMIZE BURDENS ON SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES IMPACTED BY COVID-19

WC Docket No. 13-184

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) and the Office of the Managing Director (OMD) notify E-Rate program participants that the FCC Form 470, the form that E-Rate program applicants use to solicit bids from service providers for E-Rate eligible services, will remain unchanged for funding year 2021 to allow schools and libraries to continue to focus their time and resources on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ In so doing, we seek to avoid the potential for further confusion and burden on applicants at a time when they are continuing to transition their students, patrons, teachers, and staff to remote learning and working. We therefore defer making any changes to the form until funding year 2022.

In October 2019, WCB and OMD issued a Public Notice seeking comment on whether and how the FCC Form 470 drop-down menu options may be improved to minimize the potential for applicant confusion, to address stakeholder concerns, and, to the extent practicable, to reduce administrative burdens on applicants and service providers.² At the time, WCB and OMD anticipated making any potential changes to the FCC Form 470 drop-down menu choices in time for applicants to conduct their competitive bidding for funding year 2021.³

Given the ongoing disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we think it prudent to defer making changes to the FCC Form 470 drop-down menu options until funding year 2022 to allow schools and libraries to continue to focus their time and resources on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic without the added burden of having to familiarize themselves with a modified form. In the interim, we will continue to monitor E-Rate program participants' experience using the FCC Form 470 for funding year 2021 to determine whether additional guidance is necessary to mitigate potential confusion regarding the existing drop-down menu options.⁴ Applicants may begin conducting their competitive bidding for

¹ The E-Rate program is formally known as the schools and libraries universal service support mechanism.

² See *Wireline Competition Bureau and Office of the Managing Director Seek Comment on Improving FCC Form 470 Drop-Down Menu*, WC Docket No. 13-184, Public Notice, 34 FCC Rcd 8719 (WCB 2019) (seeking comment on whether and how the FCC Form 470 drop-down menu options, including the way in which applicants are guided to the appropriate menu option, may be improved).

³ *Id.*

⁴ See, e.g., Letter from Kris Anne Monteith, Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau and Mark Stephens, Director, Office of the Managing Director, to Radha Sekar, Chief Executive Officer, USAC, DA 20-597 (WCB & OMD rel. Jun. 8, 2020) (directing USAC not to deny or issue a commitment adjustment solely because the funding year 2020 applicant selected the "Internet Access: ISP Service Only (No Transport Circuit Included)" drop-down menu option and subsequently requested funding for a service with data transmission); Letter from Kris Anne Monteith, Chief,

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funding year 2021 as soon as the FCC Form 470 is released. We expect USAC to release the funding year 2021 FCC Form 470 on July 1, 2020.

For further information, please contact Stephanie Minnock, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, at (202) 418-7400 or (202) 418-0829 (TTY), or at Stephanie.Minnock@fcc.gov.

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Wireline Competition Bureau and Mark Stephens, Director, Office of the Managing Director, to Radha Sekar, Chief Executive Officer, USAC, 34 FCC Rcd 8716 (WCB & OMD 2019) (providing same guidance to USAC for funding year 2019).