

MONTHLY UPDATE

2nd Edition

In this Issue

Wildfires in California -

Request for waiver with the Federal Communications Commission

E-rate trainings - three all day bootcamps, CETPA and special invitation to meet with Stanislaus County technology coordinators

E-rate direct assistance to applicants and service providers - engaging the help of the Universal Service Administrative Company to overcome complex E-rate issues.

Outreach: E-rate News Flash and the FCC Form 486 reminders continue to be effective.

BIIG: continued preparation for the 2018 round of supersedures, as well as troubleshoot billing issues with prior year supersedures.

AB104 - Procurement Training: sessions at CETPA and a full day workshop at San Bernardino COE

Wildfire in California

The 2017 year was one of the worst years in the history of California for wildfire. These fires were not contained to wilderness areas of the state, but directly affected our communities and schools.



The California E-rate Team, consisting of employees of the California Department of Education (CDE) and the K12 High Speed Network (K12HSN), drafted a waiver request and submitted it to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for consideration. This request is designed to give the FCC the opportunity to offer E-rate relief to the affected areas. The relief can be as little as the waiver of document retention policies (currently a 10 year burden) or as much as additional funds being provided to rebuild networks within schools.

The FCC is now seeking additional comments from schools. These comments will be used by the FCC to determine the level of relief that will be granted. The deadline for response is January 10, 2018.

The FCC’s request for comment on the waiver has been shared with schools via the CETPA listserv, the TTSC listserv and the E-rate News Flash.

Outreach - Deadline Reminders

The FCC Form 486 reminder emails are continuing to be sent out. In summary:

October - 351 email reminders

November - 104 email reminders

December - 48 email reminders

The feedback from the reminders has been positive. Many have filed their FCC Form 486 because of the reminders.

Outreach - E-rate News Flash

The E-rate News Flash continues to serve as an effective way of communicating with LEAs about issues that pertain to E-rate in the California setting.

Summary of topics covered:

E-rate profile updates - the SLD opened the "administrative window" in early January. This allows LEAs to update necessary data such as enrollment and NSLP numbers. The News Flash provided guidance on the benefits of also including the CDS number in the E-rate profile.

Application window - Reminded LEAs of the upcoming E-rate application window deadlines.

Relief for Wildfire victims - made LEAs aware of the FCC's request for comment on the Wildfire waiver.

E-rate Trainings

Summary to date:

- Full day workshop: 3 trainings with 109 registered. Focused on the full E-rate cycle, how-to's and strategy
- E-rate Primer webinar: 4 one hour webinars with 62 registered. Focused on the foundational principals of E-rate.
- E-rate Form 470 and bidding webinar: 2 ninety minute webinars with 41 registered. Focused on the E-rate Form 470 and procurement requirements.
- CETPA: a single session that covered the status and prognosis of the E-rate program. There were about 35 in attendance.

We have seen an increase in the number of participants registering for the trainings this year. The feedback has been very positive as well as constructive:

"This training provided more specifics than other E-Rate sessions that I have attended. It was presented from the point of view of an applicant."

"Rachel is a very good teacher and covered the topics in the detail according to the audience she had. I felt she was very detailed with her answers to questions."

"More 470 application examples"

"Log the questions so can reference them and the replies/answers for future references"

E-rate Direct Assistance

The California E-rate Team has enjoyed the opportunity to help applicants resolve complex issues with E-rate that were affecting the applicants' funding level.

For example, a service provider in the Merced area began to question if it could afford to continue to be an E-rate provider given the difficulty they were having in receiving the funds. The proper research was conducted by the CA E-rate team, and then we engaged USAC, who brought 3 managers to the call. By the end of the discussion there were several errors identified, all of them were system issues. In the end, we were able to deliver some good news to the service

provider, helping them to receive partial funding right away. The other issues identified would take more time to work through the system.

Another example was of an applicant that was going through the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review process, but who was denied a second extension. This extension was needed in order to determine available Category 2 funds. After engaging the USAC team, the applicant was granted the second extension.

The relationships developed with USAC and SECA have enabled the CA E-rate team to be the best resource possible to LEAs in California.

Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Grant (BIIG)

The assistance provided to the BIIG recipients goes beyond just making sure they sign the proper documents and fill out the proper forms. The E-rate assistance has included providing guidance on filing appeals. One such applicant was approved very quickly for their E-rate funds for the 2017-18 year. However, they were approved at a 50% discount rate, rather than a 90% discount rate. Assistance was provided on how to file the appeal. Once the appeal went into review, it was approved at the 90% rate within five days.

Now that the E-rate window for the 2018-19 year has been announced, we are able to start working with the LEAs that will be assuming ownership of their new circuits that were provided by the BIIG funds. Webinars are scheduled for mid-January. These webinars will focus on the consortium model of E-rate, ensuring the LEAs understand the procurement process that was conducted, and helping them successfully submit their E-rate forms. Last year's applications have proven that if the LEA submits their application according to the guidance we provide, their are highly likely to receive an early funding commitment from E-rate.

AB104: Technology Procurement Training

The Technology Procurement Training sessions continue, with an all day bootcamp at the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools. This has been one of the highest attended sessions to date. Future trainings are modified to include the unique scenarios that come out of each bootcamp. The San Bernardino training brought out some unique scenarios that had not yet been discussed, which added to fully engaged audience. Feedback from the trainings continues to be positive.

Early 2018 will mark the first in the Train the Trainer series. This training will focus on County Offices of Education and how they can support their districts in the procurement process.

The online course through Canvas is still in the development stages. It is hoped to have the final draft completed by early January so that it can begin the testing stages as soon as possible.

Upcoming for early 2018:

- E-rate full day workshops: Sacramento and Santa Clara
- TAPD Procurement sessions: Redding, Santa Clara
- TAPD Procurement Train the Trainer session: Sacramento
- K12 High Speed Network Advisory Board meeting
- TTSC meeting
- CENIC Letter of Agency campaign
- Continued outreach to E-rate applications for deadline reminders
- Continued work with the BIIG transfer of service project
- SECA weekly engagements
- E-rate News Flash editions

This monthly report serves as a communication vehicle to various Administrators, providing updates on the accomplishments of the HSN Department of Butte County Office of Education. This is a small reflection of the work accomplished.