

**Broadband Florida Q1 2013 PPR Report Details
Project Attachment – Technical Assistance (E-rate)**

Question 2. Describe your progress meeting each major activity/milestone approved in the Project Plan for this project; any challenges or obstacles encountered and mitigation strategies you have employed; planned major activities for the next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.

The E-Rate Assistance Team continued to provide outreach, assistance, and training to Florida schools and libraries throughout the quarter in addition to conducting research and analysis of factors affecting success rates in the program.

The FY 2013-2014 E-Rate filing window was open from December 12, 2012 through March 14, 2013. During this period, the E-Rate Assistance Team's principal duty was to assist the state's schools and libraries with their respective procurement and application processes and to file the Forms 471 for SUNCOM state master contract customers. Since this was the first year that USAC required the Department to be the applicant for those customers, there were some glitches in the process, but the E-Rate team worked closely with USAC to resolve them and all applications were filed on time.

In addition, the E-Rate Assistance Team has been is preparing a new Customer Relationship Management Tool (CRM) to better field Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) and other program questions. During the second quarter of 2013, the E-Rate Assistance staff will be conducting site visits to a handful of school districts and libraries throughout the state of Florida and pursuing other projects jointly with the Division. The staff also will be responding to PIA review questions for the 107 applications they filed on behalf of SUNCOM state master contract customers.

FY 2013-2014 State Master Contract Filing Process

- Received 90 Letters of Agency from SUNCOM customers and created 225 Shell FCC Form 471 applications. This information was then distributed to the customers via a Guidance Letter and accompanying Checklist and other relevant filing documents. Customers were asked to fill in certain parts of the applications and provide requested information to the E-Rate Assistance Team so that they in turn could complete the applications and file them with USAC.
- Filed and certified 107 FCC Form 471 applications for SUNCOM state master contract customers. The applications for 216 funding requests contained \$13,599,833.80 in total pre-discounted dollars and \$10,389,142.30 in E-Rate discount requests, with an average discount percentage of 76%.
- Received and reviewed 107 FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgement Letters (RALs). Shared those letters with the relevant SUNCOM customers and filed seven (7) filing corrections via USAC's Ministerial & Clerical Errors corrections process.
- After the close of the application window, the team sent state master contract customers surveys asking them for feedback on the new filing process. Overall, the response was very positive with constructive feedback for how the process could be improved for next year. Here is a sampling of the feedback:

'We were kept informed and the communication was excellent through the whole process'

'Even though there might have been some questions because it was a new concept this year, the DMS E-rate support was outstanding. We received fast responses.'

'Training was good, communication was on-going and excellent'

'I cannot say enough good things about Bridget Duff and the rest of the team. They were extremely helpful!'

'It was a good process considering it was the first year that DMS filed the state master contracts. I think next year will run smoother.'

'Mr. Arauz was extremely kind and patient and kept us informed the whole way.'

'It is a relief for me that I do not have to keep up with all of the different applications.'

'love it!'

Applicant Outreach

- E-Rate FY 2012-13 and FY 2013-2014: Inquiries via the Customer Relationship Portal:
 - 177 cases were directed to staff from the E-Rate Assistance portal
 - Of those cases, 172 were resolved and closed and 5 remain open. Topics addressed in resolved cases included:
 - Responses to 2nd Day correspondence from Schools & Libraries reviewers
 - Issues that arise during PIA review, such as NSLP and entity verification and DMS contract questions.
 - FY2013-2014 related correspondence such as Letters of Agency, FCC Forms 479 and other filing materials.
 - Program questions such as:
 - ✓ Technology Plan certification questions
 - ✓ Invoicing questions (GRID or Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) forms)
 - ✓ General E-Rate questions regarding procurement and FCC Form 471 applications for FY2013-2014.
- The E-Rate Assistance Team continued its statewide outreach by issuing periodic reminders to advise E-Rate stakeholders of upcoming program deadlines, eligibility updates and best filing practices.

- E-Rate FY2012/13: The team tracked FY2012-13 USAC funding waves 24-37 totaling over \$11.9M in funding and 195 funding requests (statewide).
- Weekly E-Rate LISTSERV notifications of funding status were monitored and tracked by the team.

Outreach to Other Stakeholder State Agencies

Department of Education

The team continues to work with the Florida Department of Education (DOE) staff directly responsible for NSLP statistics and Technology Plan review and approval. During the FY 2013-2014 application process, the DOE provided the Block 4 worksheet and DMS State E-Rate Coordinators referred schools and libraries to DOE for that information and worked with state master contract customers to incorporate it into their FY2013-2014 FCC Forms 471 applications.

The E-Rate team and other Division staff continued an ongoing series of meetings with DOE representatives to discuss school bandwidth needs related to upcoming mandates regarding online student assessment and e-Book requirements. As part of that effort, E-Rate staff responded to Florida Legislature requests for E-Rate information and analysis.

Outreach Within the Department of Management Services

The E-Rate team continues to work hand-in-hand with DMS project managers to ensure E-Rate program compliance during DMS procurement processes and in resulting contracts. During the first quarter of this year the team continued to work on the implementation of DMS 12/13-001 Telecommunications Infrastructure Project Services (TIPS). New projects include procurements for services such as local telephone Service (Centrex), long distance telephone services, and various data service offerings.

The team continues to work with the Division's Billing and Project Management group for the annual reconciliation of all FIRN contract billing that is undertaken with the service provider, AT&T. The team also continues to field questions regarding the USAC Service Provider Invoice (SPI) and Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) invoicing processes.

After the FY 2013-2014 USAC filing window closed, the E-Rate Assistance Team commenced working with internal DivTel staff to design new billing and USAC invoicing processes for state master contract customers.

Other E-rate Assistance Team Outreach Efforts

The team issued weekly E-rate related bulletins via our customized LISTSERV and actively participated in weekly issues/news teleconferences with the State E-rate Coordinators' Alliance (SECA). It also conducted weekly monitoring of USAC weekly briefs and distributed these bulletins to our constituency as needed via:

- LISTSERV messages
- Individual Phone or Email contact

- Webinar when appropriate.
- One-on-one assistance

Training

The E-Rate Assistance Team conducted a webinar on January 25, 2013 to address general E-Rate information and the new DMS master contract filing process. This webinar was attended by over 55 school and library representatives.

Conferences

The E-Rate Assistance Team attended and made a presentation on the Florida state master contract filing process at the annual FETC Conference in Orlando, Florida January 28-31, 2013. The team also had one-on-one meetings with representatives from Orange, Sumter, Martin, and St. Lucie County School Districts, and the Redlands Christian Migrant Association, to discuss their specific E-Rate questions.

Site Visits

The E-Rate Assistance Team met with representatives from Gadsden and Washington County school districts to provide one-on-one assistance with their FY2013/14 E-Rate application processes. These sessions also included FY2012/13 post commitment Billed Entity Application Reimbursement (BEAR) invoicing support and guidance on certain elements of competitive bid and vendor selection procedures.