#### **Funding Commitment Decision Letter**

After the pre-funding review is completed -- called the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review -- USAC will issue a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) to both the applicant and the associated service provider(s) via email and in the EPC portal. If the amount of requested funding was modified, the letter will provide a brief explanation. The FCDL notification is emailed to the Form 471 contact person and the Account Administrator of the applicant's EPC portal. The FCDL also contains important information about next steps, such as filing Form 486 and/or an appeal if you disagree with the FCDL.

The FCC has established a performance goal for USAC to issue FCDLs on all "workable" Form 471 applications by September 1 each year. The definition of "workable" means:

- a funding request is filed timely and is complete, with all necessary information, to enable a reviewer to make the appropriate funding decision; and
- the applicant, provider, and any consultants are not subject to investigation, audit, or other similar reason for delay in a funding decision.
- The applicant is available to answer questions. When the applicant elects to defer answering
  questions during the summer, the application is considered unworkable until after the summer
  deferral period ends.

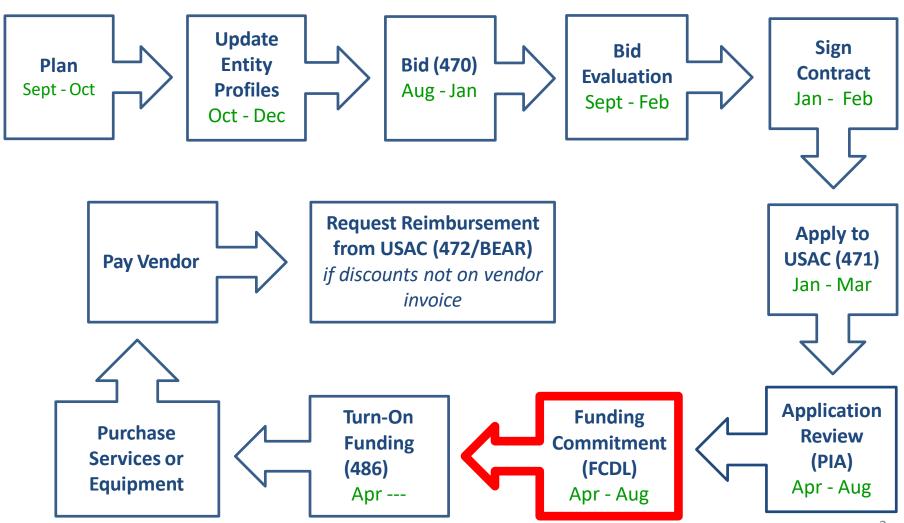
FCDLs are emailed on a weekly basis in batches called "waves." Weekly wave notices typically begin in late April (a few weeks following the close of the Form 471 application filing window) and continue until all applications have been decided.

## Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) Guide FY 2025



Spring 2025

### You are **here** in the E-Rate process:



### FY 2025 FCDL Overview

- After USAC reviews your Form 471, they issue a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) to the applicant
- FCDLs are issued in weekly funding 'waves' from late April until all applications are decided
  - Goal is for USAC to issue all FCDLs for "workable" application by September 1
- The FCDL is sent via email to 471 contact, and copies all full rights' users
  - No paper FCDLs are mailed
  - Email notification contains 2 attachments:
    - .CSV file with information in Excel format
    - User-friendly PDF of the FCDL

### **FCDL Emails Look Like This**

USAC: Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) available for FCC Form 471 251018393, SOUTH DAKOTA STATE DEPT OF ED (134238)



#### **Next Steps**

- 1. Work with your service provider(s) to determine if your bills will be discounted or if you will request reimbursement from USAC after paying the undiscounted cost for the services you receive.
- 2. Review the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requirements and file the FCC Form 486 (Service Confirmation and CIPA Certification Form). The deadline to submit this form is 120 days from the date of this letter or from the service start date (whichever is later).
  - 3. Invoice USAC
- o **If you (the applicant) are invoicing USAC:** You must pay your service provider(s) the undiscounted cost for the services you receive and file the <u>FCC Form 472</u>, the Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form, to invoice USAC for reimbursement of the discounted cost of services.
- o **If your service provider(s)** are invoicing **USAC:** The service provider(s) must provide services, bill the applicant at the discounted rate, and file the <u>FCC Form 474</u>, the Service Provider Invoice (SPI) form, to invoice USAC for reimbursement for the discounted portion of costs. Each funding year, service providers must file an <u>FCC Form 473</u>, the Service Provider Annual Certification Form, to be able to submit invoices and to receive disbursements.

For more information, including how to appeal a decision, please see the attached letter.

Please keep a copy of this notification for your records.

Sincerely,

Universal Service Administrative Co.

## User-Friendly FCDL in .pdf Format

- First 3 pages of FCDL contain important notices:
  - Next step to file 486
  - Appeal process if funding was denied or reduced
  - Applicant responsibilities obligation to pay nondiscounted share, etc.
- Page 4 contains a summary of the decision
  - Lists each FRN Amount Requested, Amount Funded
    - Reductions or denials should be explained
- Next pages list the details of each FRN

### **FCDL Overview Page**

### **Funding Commitment Decision Overview**

Funding Year 2025

Comment explains any changes to funding

### Application Comments for FCC Form 471: #251018393

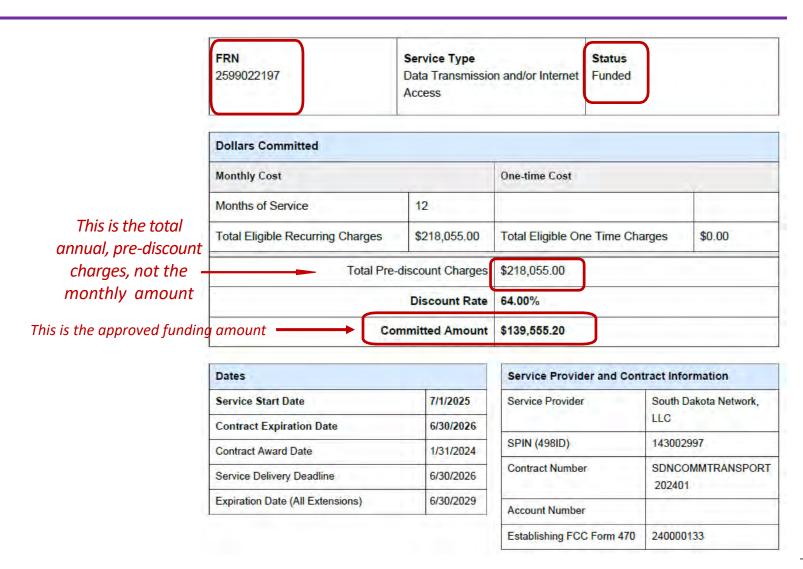
The NSLP for BEN 17030863 PROJECT SEARCH - AVERA MCKENNA was decreased from 6 to 0 students based on third party documentation. <><><>>< BEN 17049477 Teachwell

### **Funding Commitment Decision Overview**

Funding Request Number (FRN)	Service Provider Name	Amount Requested	Amount Committed	Status
2599022159	South Dakota Network, LLC	\$1,330,913.74	\$1,330,913.74	Funded
2599022197	South Dakota Network, LLC	\$139,555.20	\$139,555.20	Funded

Shows amount requested and amount committed

### FRN Detail Page



### **FCDL Comments**

If anything was changed on the application, either at the request of the applicant or by the PIA reviewer, those changes will be indicated here.

Funding Commitment Decision Comments

MR1: Approved as submitted.

If no changes were made, it will say "Approved as submitted."

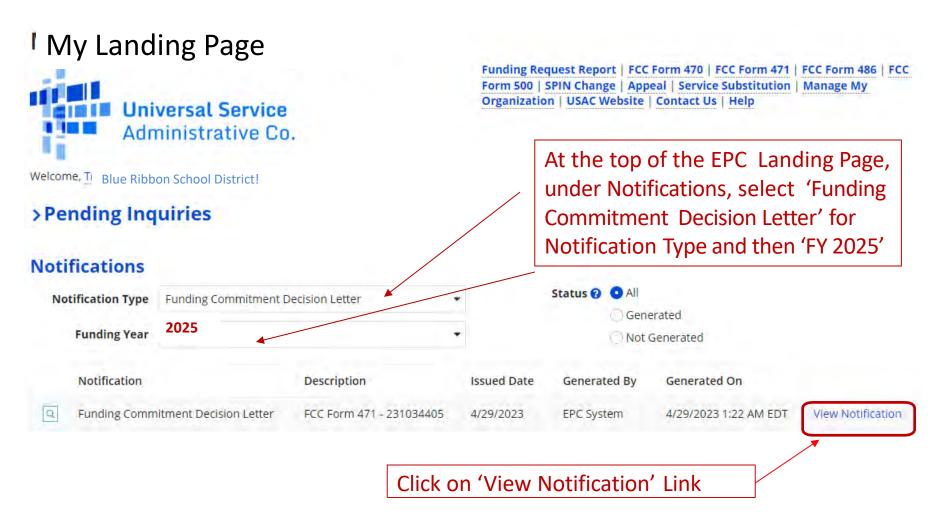
### .CSV Version of FCDL

- In addition to the .pdf version, the FCDL also is sent as a .CSV file
  - The same information is contained in both files but formatted differently
  - .CSV file is helpful if you want to create an Excel table with your FCDL information
- The \*.CSV file will open as a spreadsheet

BEN	BEN NAME	FRN	FCC Form 471	Status	Service Type	Establishing FCC Form 470	Service Provider	Contract Expiration Date	Award Date	Expiration Date (All Extensions)	Total Eligible Recurring Charges	Total Eligible One Time Charges	Total Pre-Discount Charges	Discount Rate	Committed Amount
	SOUTH				Data										
	DAKOTA				Transmission										
	STATE DEPT				and/or Internet		South Dakota								
134238	OF ED	2599022159	251018393	Funded	Access	240000133	Network, LLC	6/30/2026	1/31/2024	6/30/2029	\$2,079,552.72	\$0.00	\$2,079,552.72	64.00%	\$1,330,913.74

- Expand all the columns to view the entire contents of the file
- Pay close attention to ensure that the committed amount is the same amount that you were expecting

### Generating FCDLs in EPC



### FCDL in EPC

At the top of the Newsfeed, you will see an lannouncement explaining the FCDL



E-Rate Productivity Center Thank you for submitting your application for Funding Year 2025 Schools and Libraries Program (E-rate) funding. Attached to this post, you will find the funding statuses for the FCC Form(s) 471, Services Ordered and Certification Form, that you submitted.

The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) is providing this information to both the applicant(s) and the service provider(s) so that all parties are aware of the post-commitment changes related to their funding requests and can work together to complete the funding process for these requests.

#### Next Steps

- 1. Work with your service provider(s) to determine if your bills will be discounted or if you will request reimbursement from USAC after paying the undiscounted cost for the services you receive.
- 2. Review the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requirements and file the FCC Form 486 (Service Confirmation and CIPA Certification Form). The deadline to submit this form is 120 days from the date of this letter or fro ... More



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE DEPT OF ED Funding Commitment Decision Letter PDF 44 KB

PDF version of FCDL

 same doc that was emailed to 471 contact

.CSV version FCDL same doc that was emailed to 471 contact



#134238 - SOUTH DAK... FY 2025-26 South Dako...



Aug 21, 2025 & Comment More Info -

### Next Steps...

#### Review your FCDL Closely!

- Make certain you agree with their decision. If not, file an appeal
- Appeals must be dated and submitted within 60 days of the date of the FCDL. Submit appeals in EPC

#### Request Discounts

- If you want your vendor to provide discounted bills, notify them immediately
- Some vendors will have additional paperwork to complete identifying the FRN, account number, etc.
- File Form 486: To "turn on funding" you must file a Form 486 within 120 days of the FCDL date (or October 28, whichever is later)
  - The 486 must be filed in EPC
  - VERY easy to file. Go to Landing Page and select "FCC Form 486"
  - Remember, you cannot file the Form 486 until a funding commitment has been issued for an FRN

#### Form 486 Overview

After applicants receive their Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL), the next step is to file the Form 486. FCC Form 486, "Receipt of Service Confirmation and Children's Internet Protection Act Certification Form," notifies USAC that the billed entity and/or the eligible entities that it represents is receiving, or has received, service in the relevant funding year from the named service provider(s).

#### **Purpose of FCC Form 486**

Applicants file an FCC Form 486 to:

- Notify USAC that services have started for the recipients of service included on one or more funded Funding Request Numbers (FRNs).
- Indicate the status of compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) for the recipients of service for the FRN(s).

#### When to File FCC Form 486

Applicants cannot file the FCC Form 486 for an FRN until USAC issues a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) with a positive funding commitment.

Early Filing: Applicants that have received an FCDL, confirmed with their service providers that services will start in July of the upcoming funding year, and can truthfully make all of the certifications on the form, can file FCC Form 486 early - that is, before services have started for the funding year.

Deadline: FCC Form 486 must be certified no later than 120 days after the service start date shown on the FCC Form 486 or 120 days after the date of the FCDL, whichever date is later.

Practice tip: It is recommended to file the Form 486 as soon as you receive your FCDL, so it is not forgotten and to enable discounted bills, if desired, to begin as soon as possible in the new funding year. Please keep in mind that only FRNs that have been funded can be listed on a Form 486. If your application is still pending you must wait until it has been approved before filing the Form 486.

For applicants requesting discounted bills, most service providers require the SLD notification that the applicant has filed the 486 and the 486 has been approved before they can begin discounting your bills. The Form 486 approval notification is transmitted electronically to the applicant and each service provider listed on the Form 486 in their EPC portals, and typically is received quickly after the form is submitted. The sooner you file this form, the better.

Please refer to the enclosed Guide for completing and submitting Form 486 in EPC.

#### Early Form 486 Filing

The form will ask if you are filing the Form 486 early and, if you have received your FCDL and services will begin before July 31, you should check this box.

! Extreme Caution: When checking the certification boxes on Form 486, be very careful and read the certifications and only check the ones that apply. For all applicants except consortia, only check the 1st CIPA certification, and not the last two. If you check one of the last two CIPA certifications, it unchecks the first certification and your application will be subject to PIA review before being approved, which will greatly delay your ability to receive discounted bills or submit your BEAR reimbursement forms.

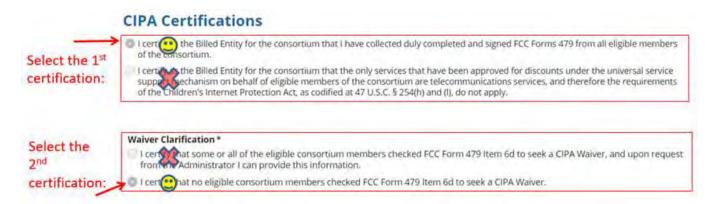
The certifications should be checked as follows, to verify your organization is compliant with CIPA:

#### **CIPA Certifications**

- It certify that as the start of discounted services: a. the recipient(s) of service represented in the Funding Request Number(s) on this FCC Form (have) complied with the requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act, as codified at 47 U.S.C. § 254(h) and (l).
- I certify that as a the date of the start of discounted services: Pursuant to the Children's Internet Protection Act, as codified at 47 U.S.C. § 254(h) and (l), the pient(s) of service represented in the Funding Request Number(s) on this Form 486: (FOR SCHOOLS and FOR LIBRARIES IN THE FIRST FUNDING YEAR FOR PURPOSES OF CIPA) is (are) undertaking such actions, including any necessary procurement procedures, to comply with the requirements of CIPA for the next funding year, but has (have) not completed all requirements of CIPA for this funding year.
- I certify that as the late of the start of discounted services: The Children's Internet Protection Act does not apply because the recipient(s) of service represented in the Funding Request Number(s) on this FCC Form 486 is (are) receiving discount services only for telecommunications services.

#### CIPA Certifications for Consortia

Before the lead consortia member can file Form 486 on behalf of the consortium, the consortium lead must collect a signed Form 479 (each year) from each consortia member. The Form 479 certifies that the consortium member is compliant with CIPA. After all members' completed Forms 479 have been collected, the consortium lead may file the Form 479 and check the following CIPA certifications – assuming that all of the consortium members are in fact compliant with CIPA.



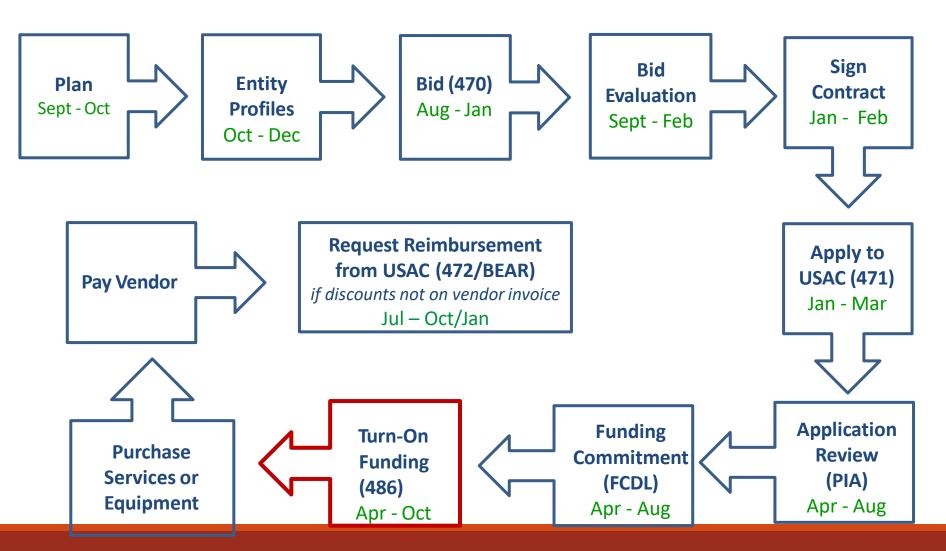


### Form 486 Filing Guide

Debra Kriete, Esq.
South Dakota State E-rate Coordinator
for the South Dakota Department of Education
June 12, 2025



### Where We Are in the E-Rate Cycle - PIA



## FY 2025 Form 486 Filings

- Once FCDL is issued, Form 486 must be filed within 120 days of the FCDL date or by 10/28/2025, whichever date is later
  - Certify compliance with Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
  - Certify receipt of services or ordering equipment green light for submitting E-rate invoices (either BEAR or SPI)
- If the Form 486 deadline is missed, an "urgent reminder" letter will be posted in the EPC News Feed, and an email will be sent to the Form 471 contact person.
  - Can file Form 486 within 15 days of urgent reminder letter without any penalty
  - If Form 486 is filed after the 15<sup>th</sup> day, the service start date may be adjusted, resulting in loss of some funding
    - ❖ Appeal can be submitted to fully restore all funding should this happen

### Form 486 Overview

- Form 486 has two purposes:
  - ❖ It informs the SLD that they are authorized to pay invoices (either BEAR or SPIFs), and
  - ❖ It informs the SLD that your school or library is CIPA compliant
- Can only be filed after the FCDL has been issued (after funding has been committed)
- ❖ BEAR and vendor (SPI) invoices cannot be paid until the Form 486 has been submitted
  - ❖ FY 2025 BEARs and SPIs cannot be submitted until July 1, 2025
- Vendors will usually not discount bills until the Form 486 has been submitted/approved

### Form 486 in EPC

- All Form 486s must be filed in EPC
- Form 486 Approval Letters are emailed to applicant
  - Letters also are available under **Notifications** on the EPC Landing Page
- Form 486 is streamlined
  - Form pre-populates FRNs and service start dates based on the approved 471(s)
    - Applicants will select relevant FRNs and will not enter new data
  - Certifications vary depending on applicant type (school, library or consortium)
  - Form is brief and quick to complete
- ❖ Both the Applicant and each Vendor with a SPIN associated with an FRN on the Form 486 will receive a Form 486 Approval Notification in their vendor portals

# Consortium Leads - Must Collect Annual Form 479 from Each Consortium Member

- For consortia applicants to be able to submit the Form 486, they are required to collect annual signed Form 479s from their consortia members
  - The consortia lead can then submit the Form 486 and certify that they have collected the 479s and that no consortia member is seeking a CIPA waiver
- Form 479 is a paper form
  - Not online or in EPC
  - Available at: <a href="https://www.usac.org/wp-content/uploads/E-Rate/documents/Forms/479.pdf">https://www.usac.org/wp-content/uploads/E-Rate/documents/Forms/479.pdf</a>
  - Form 479s are not submitted to USAC
  - Consortia leads must retain these for 11 years
  - Submit to USAC during audits, if requested

## Finding the Form 486 in EPC

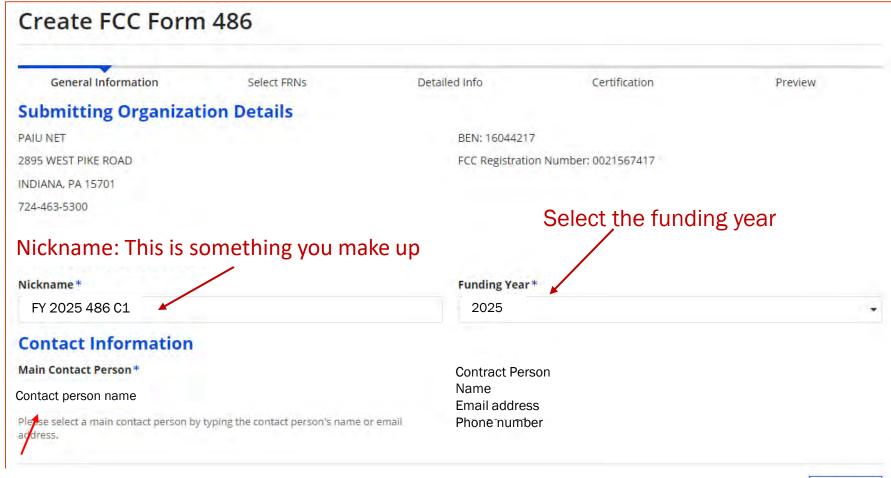
After the FCDL has been received, you may file the Form 486. From your EPC Landing Page, click on FCC Form 486 in upper right corner.

#### My Landing Page



Funding Request Report | FCC Form 470 | FCC Form 471 | FCC Form 486 | FCC Form 500 | Appeal | SPIN Change | Service Substitution | Manage My Organization | USAC Website | Contact os | Help

## Nickname/Contact Name



Contact Person: Select from one of the EPC users by typing the first few letters of the person's first name

CONTINUE

## Selecting FRNs: Don't User Filter



Note: Your FRNs & 471 #s will start with "25" for FY 2025.



## Adding FRNs

Note: Your FRNs & 471 #s will start with "25" for FY 2025.

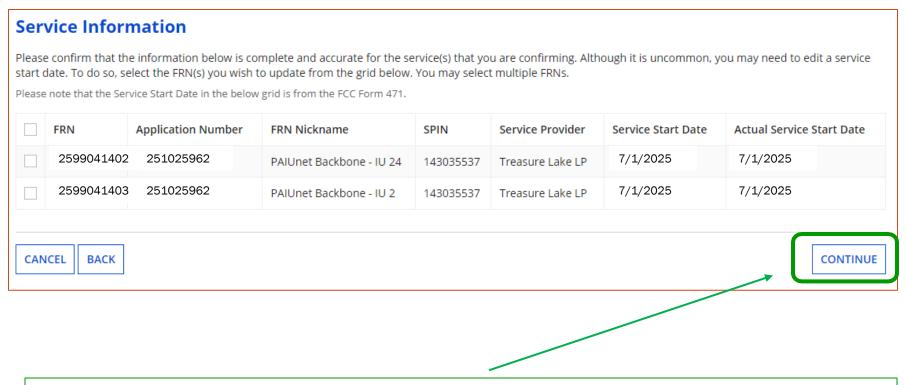


Then click





### Confirm Data is Accurate



If all data is accurate, simply click **Continue**. (If you need to change the Service Start Date to a date LATER than what you listed on the 471, check the box next to the FRN # and enter the revised date. Note: This is extremely rare and if you do it for a C1 FRN, USAC will reduce your funding if you push back your service start date.)

## Early Filing/CIPA Waiver?

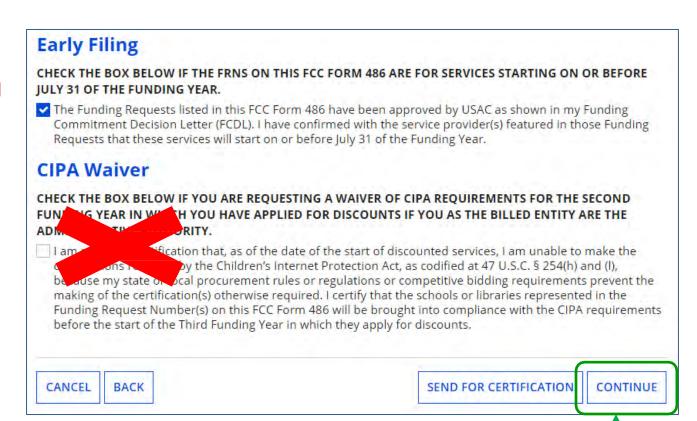
Early Filing: Only check this box if the FCDL is dated prior to July 31 and if your services will begin prior to July. Don't check after July 31.

<u>CIPA Waiver</u>: Do not check.

(Virtually all entities are CIPA compliant and therefore <u>do</u> <u>not</u> check the CIPA waiver box.)

#### **Click Continue**

(The only time you should ever use "Send for Certification" is if you want someone else in your EPC profile to certify the application.)



### General Certifications – All Applicants

Check the top 2 certification boxes - required for all applicants.

#### Certifications

- ✓ I certify that the services listed on this FCC Form 486 have been, are planned to be, or are being provided to all or some of the eligible entities identified in the FCC Form 471 application(s) cited above. I certify that there are signed contracts covering all of the services listed on this FCC Form 486 except for those services provided under tariff or on a month-to-month basis. I certify that I am authorized to submit this receipt of service confirmation on behalf of the above-named Billed Entity; that I have examined this request; and that, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, all statements of fact contained herein are true.
- ✓ I understand that the discount level used for shared services is conditional, for future years, upon ensuring that the most disadvantaged schools and libraries that are treated as sharing in the services receive an appropriate share of benefits from those services. I recognize that I may be audited pursuant to this application and will retain for at least ten years (or whatever retention period is required by the rules in effect at the time of this certification) after the latter of the last day of the applicable funding year or the service delivery deadline for the funding request any and all records, including FCC Forms 479 where required, and, if audited, will make such records available to the Administrator.

### CIPA Certifications – All Applicants Except Consortia

#### Be Careful – don't get click happy!!!

ONLY check the first circle to signify that you are CIPA compliant.

Do NOT check the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> buttons!

(Rare: If you are NOT CIPA compliant and are only receiving telecommunications services (not Internet or C2), then check the 3<sup>rd</sup> box

# ○ I certifications of the date of the start of discounted services: a. the recipient(s) of service represented in the Funding Purple of the Children's rest Number(s) on this FCC Form 486 has (have) complied with the requirements of the Children's

Internet Protection Act, as codified at 47 U.S.C. § 254(h) and (l).

- Leertify that as of the date of the start of discounted services: Pursuant to the Children's Internet Protection Act, as codified at 47 U.S.C. § 254(h) and (l), the recipient(s) of service represented in the Funding Request Number(s) on this Form 486: (FOR SCHOOLS and FOR LIBRARIES IN THE FIRST FUNDING YEAR FOR PURPOSES OF CIPA) is (are) undertaking such actions, including any necessary procurement procedures, to comply with the requirements of CIPA for the next funding year, but has (have) not completed all requirements of CIPA for
- I certify that as of the date of the start of discounted services: The Children's Internet Protection Act does not apply because the recipient(s) of service represented in the Funding Request Number(s) on this FCC Form 486 is (are) receiving discount services only for telecommunications services.

CANCEL BACK

this funding year.



## Certifying the Form 486

#### Certifications

- The Funding Requests listed in this FCC Form 486 have been approved by USAC as shown in my Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL), I have confirmed with the service provider(s) featured in those Funding Requests that these services will start on or before July 31 of the Funding Year.
- I certify that the services listed on this FCC Form 486 have been, are planned to be, or are being provided to all or some of the eligible entities identified in the FCC Form 471 application(s) cited above. I certify that there are signed contracts covering all of the services listed on this FCC Form 486 except for those services provided under tariff or on a month-to-month basis. I certify that I am authorized to submit this receipt of service confirmation on behalf of the above-named Billed Entity; that I have examined this request; and that, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, all statements of fact contained herein are true.
- I understand that the discount level used for shared services is conditional, for future years, upon ensuring that the most disadvantaged schools and libraries that are treated as sharing in the services receive an appropriate share of benefits from those services. I recognize that I may be audited pursuant to this application and will retain for at least ten years (or whatever retention period is required by the rules in effect at the time of this certification) after the latter of the last day of the applicable funding year or the service delivery deadline for the funding request any and all records, including FCC Forms 479 where required, and, if audited, will make such records available to the Administrator.
- I certify that as of the date of the start of discounted services: a. the recipient(s) of service represented in the Funding Request Number(s) on this FCC Form 486 has (have) complied with the requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act, as codified at 47 U.S.C. § 254(h) and (l).



Click **Certify** to submit the Form 486.



### Click Yes to Continue

False statements on this form may result in civil liability and/or criminal prosecution. To electronically sign and certify this form, click "Yes" below. To affirm that you (1) understand the statements above and (2) represent the entity featured, and have the authority to make the certifications, on this form, click "Yes" below.



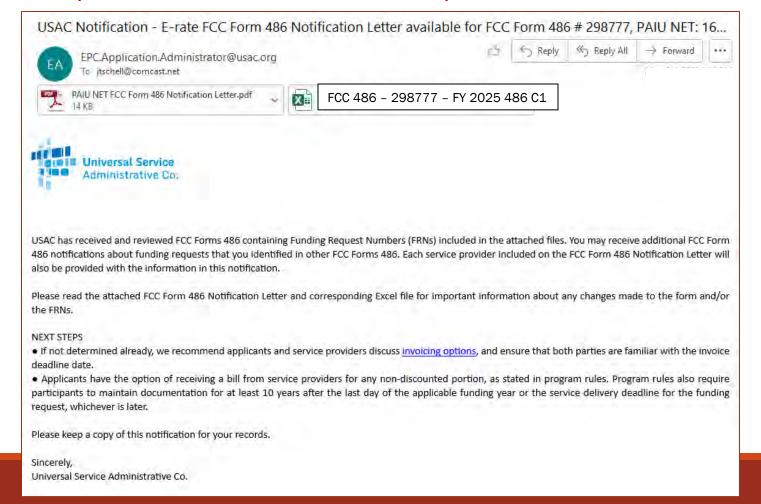
## Confirmation Page After Certifying



To print a copy of the submitted Form 486, click here

## Form 486 Approval via Email

The Form 486 Notification Letter will be emailed to the Form 486 contact person and will look like this example:



View

Notification

5/5/2025 3:16 PM EDT

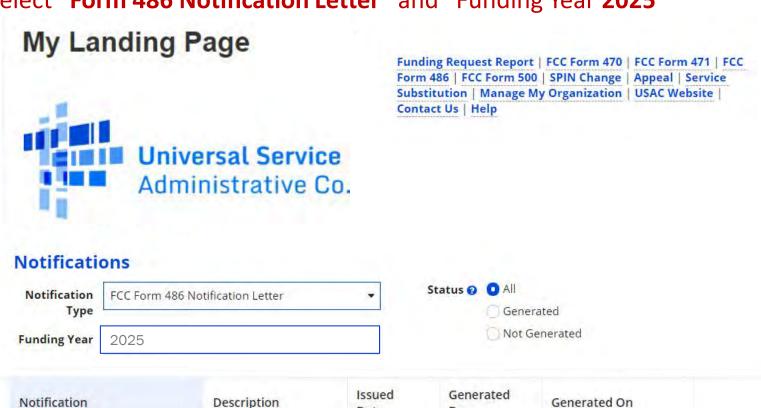
FCC Form 486 Notification

Q

Letter

### Form 486 Approval Letter in EPC

At the top of your EPC Landing Page under Notifications, select "Form 486 Notification Letter" and "Funding Year 2025



Date

5/5/2025

FCC Form 486 -

298777

By

EPC System

#### Form 479 CIPA Compliance for Consortia Members

Each consortium member submits the FCC Form 479, "Certification by Administrative Authority to Billed Entity of Compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act Form," to its consortium leader to provide notification of the consortium member's status of compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

#### **Purpose of FCC Form 479**

Consortium members (specifically the entities of the schools or libraries that make the relevant certifications for the purpose of CIPA, known as the Administrative Authorities) file FCC Forms 479 with their consortium leader to notify the consortium leader of their status under CIPA. After the consortium leader has collected all the FCC Forms 479 from the consortium members, the consortium leader completes the FCC Form 486. The Form 479 is not submitted to USAC.

#### When to complete FCC Form 479

Consortium members should submit the FCC Form 479 to the consortium leader in time for the consortium leader to file FCC Form 486.

**Deadline:** The consortium leader cannot complete the CIPA certification on the FCC Form 486 without completed FCC Forms 479 on file. Note that if the FCC Form 486 is filed after the FCC Form 486 deadline, USAC will adjust the service start date and funding may be reduced.

#### Services for which FCC Form 479 is Required

CIPA compliance is required in order to receive E-Rate funding for Internet Access, Internal Connections, Managed Internal Broadband Services and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections. The Form 479 is not required if the Form 486 indicates funding is only for Telecommunications Services.