

**Broadband Florida Q4 2012 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 as well as conduct research and analysis of factors affecting success rates in the program. The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), the program administrator, notified the Division of Telecommunications that going forward, the Division must file as the E-Rate applicant for all Division state master contract school and library customers. For the last several years, schools and libraries have been applying for such discounts themselves. USAC staff came to Florida to discuss how the transition can be most effectively handled. The E-Rate team is developing and managing this project jointly with the Division.

Applicant Outreach

- E-Rate FY 2013-2014: On October 4 and 10, the team conducted webinars for state master contract customers to explain the new DMS applicant filing procedures and to discuss their role in assisting us with completing the Forms 471 and responding to PIA requests.
- E-Rate FY 2012-13 and FY 2013-2014: Inquiries via the Customer Relationship portal:
 - 269 cases were directed to staff from the E-Rate Assistance portal
 - Of those cases, 212 were resolved and closed and 57 remain open. Topics addressed in resolved cases included:
 - Responses to any 2nd Day correspondence from Schools & Libraries reviewers
 - Resolving any issues that arise during PIA review, such as NSLP and entity verification and DMS contract questions.
 - Fall 2012 Outreach/Training registration/questions
 - Issuing reminders or resolving any post-commitment issue such as:
 - ✓ Technology Plan certification questions
 - ✓ FCC Form 486 posting assistance
 - ✓ Invoicing questions (GRID or Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) forms)
 - ✓ FY 2013-2014 State Master Contract Form 471 LOAs and Forms 479 submissions
 - ✓ FY 2013-2014 General procurement/Form 470/Form 471 questions
- E-Rate FY2012/13: The team tracked FY2012-13 USAC funding waves 17-23 totaling over \$10.5M in funding and 283 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 Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS)

The team worked alongside DACS staff during its analysis of methods to bring real-time National School Lunch Program (NSLP) reporting to the state's E-Rate stakeholders in place of the dated Department of Education (DOE) format.

Department of Education

The team continues to work with Department of Education staff directly responsible for the NSLP statistics and Technology Plan review and approval. This collaboration will be most important as DMS will be filing as an applicant on behalf of its state contract customers.

Beginning in December, the E-Rate team and other Division staff began 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.

Outreach within the Department of Management Services

The team continues to work hand in hand with DMS project managers to ensure E-Rate program compliance during the DMS procurement process and in the resulting contract from the DMS Request for Proposal No. DMS 12/13-001 Telecommunications Infrastructure Project Services (TIPS). The team assisted in the FCC Form 470 filing to initiate the procurement process for this contract and will be advising procurement specialists throughout the bid receipt and evaluation phase.

The team continues to work with the Department's Billing and Project Management group for the annual reconciliation of all FIRN billing that is undertaken with DMS partner, AT&T and continues to field statewide questions (on a per case basis) regarding the post commitment process, namely the SPI or BEAR process.

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.

Training

The E-Rate Assistance Team conducted five E-Rate Training Workshops throughout the state (Tallahassee, Gainesville, Orlando, Tampa Bay, Pensacola) in October, November, and December. The

trainings addressed general E-Rate information as well as the new DMS master contract filing process. Three of the workshops were broadcast via webinar. Over 200 school and library representatives attended the workshops.

Conferences

- The E-Rate Assistance Team attended the annual USAC Applicant Training in Atlanta, GA on October 18, 2012. At this session DMS personnel were able to learn about key program changes, improvements and best filing practices. This information was incorporated into the team's training workshops conducted for the Florida applicant community.
- The Division made a presentation at the Florida Association of District School Superintendents annual meeting on the E-Rate Assistance Team's progress in assisting the state schools and libraries since our presentation at last year's meeting.

Site Visits

- The team visited Gadsden County School District on November 9, 2012. The district has a new person tasked with handling all E-Rate matters. We provided general training and helped her understand several FY 2011-2012 application denials and provided advice regarding appeals of those denials. We also assisted her in responding to FY 2011-2012 Selective Review questions (and she was subsequently approved for funding). We also advised her on FY2013-2014 procurements and applications.

FY 2013-2014 State Master Contract Filing Process

- Beginning in October, the team began sending to 90+ Division customers periodic reminders that they must submit LOAs and Forms 479 to enable us to begin the Form 471 application process on their behalf. In November and December, we received responses from 33 customers.
- The team created 45 shell Form 471 applications and sent them to customers, along with guidance letters, checklists, and Item 21 templates.
- The team communicated several times with USAC to obtain clarification on issues related to the new process.
- The team fielded several telephone calls from customers seeking help with completion of the shell applications.