

ALA American Library Association

September 4, 2018

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Radha Sekar
Chief Executive Officer
Universal Service Administrative Company
700 12th St. NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20005

Re: *Ex Parte Submission Regarding the Fall 2018 E-rate Training Dates.* (Modernizing the E-rate Program for Schools and Libraries, WC Docket No. 13-184.)

Dear Secretary Dortch and Ms. Sekar:

On May 11, 2018, the American Library Association (ALA) submitted a letter to the Commission and USAC which focused on: (1) our observations of the fall 2017 E-rate training, and (2) recommendations for the fall 2018 E-rate training.¹ As our letter stated, “The fall 2018 workshops are on the horizon, [and] we hope the issues from last fall’s workshops... will be addressed.” While our recommendations in the May filing still stand, of a much more immediate concern is that it is now early September and USAC has yet to announce any of the training dates and sites for this fall. In past years state E-rate coordinators have often been told of the training dates and locations in July. Concerns about the 2018 fall training have been a standard agenda item on USAC’s regular conference calls with state E-rate coordinators over the past two months.² USAC’s standard response to the questions on training is that they continue to work on the issue. At this late date, we urge the Commission and USAC to finalize the dates for the fall applicant trainings with a priority on confirming the date, location, and agenda for the Washington, D.C. training.

As we stated in our May filing, the fall training workshops are particularly valuable to state and regional library and school E-rate coordinators. The coordinators most often attend the first E-rate training which traditionally is held in Washington D.C. at the end of September or early October. These individuals then include the knowledge gained from this training—especially new and updated information—as part of follow-up trainings for local libraries in their respective states and regions. But it is important to note that the dates for state-level trainings cannot be set until the coordinator knows the date(s) of the USAC training sessions.³ Another key concern is that it often takes 4-6 weeks or more for coordinators to get permission

¹ Available at https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10511471116273/ALA_FCC_USAC_E-rate_Training_Recommendations_05112018.pdf

² For example, on the July 10, 2018, USAC conference call with state library coordinators one agenda item stated: “Are there any details about the fall training schedule? Some state coordinators have to submit budget proposals for use of LSTA funding far in advance of the fiscal year, including use of those funds to attend training.”

³ Library and school calendars are very busy in the fall with many other meetings, conferences, etc., taking place. Thus it is important that E-rate training sessions get scheduled as early as possible to reserve limited meeting space and avoid other conflicts.

from their respective state library or education agencies to attend the Washington D.C., training thus it is especially critical to get the logistics of Washington D.C. training finalized and announced as soon as possible. While the Washington D.C. training is of critical importance, considering how late it now is we ask that when any of the other training sites get finalized that their details (e.g., locations, dates, etc.) be announced immediately. In other words, we strongly recommend that USAC not wait for all training site details to be finalized before making any announcement.

In conclusion, it is essential that the Commission and USAC treat this issue as a critical priority and allocate whatever resources are needed to get the fall E-rate training sites and dates finalized and announced as soon as possible. Thank you for listening to our concerns.

Sincerely,

/s/

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/s/

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/s/

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