



Memorandum

To: Anne Levine, Policy Analyst in the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis, Federal Communications Commission

From: Justin Grimes, Statistician, Office of Research Planning and Evaluation, Institute of Museum and Library Services

CC: Carlos Manjarrez, Director of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Institute of Museum and Library Services

Date: June 24, 2014

Re: Recommendations for improving the quality, structure, and dissemination of the Universal Service Administrative Company's Schools and Libraries Program (e-rate) data

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) appreciates the opportunity to provide technical assistance as you consider improvements to the Schools and Libraries Program process.

As you know, IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the libraries and museums in the United States. As part of our mission, IMLS conducts policy research, analysis, and data collection on the Nation's museums and libraries. The agency's data and data collection process may be useful for helping to improve how information is collected and used through the Schools and Libraries Program.

Provided below are recommendations:

- Separate the current NCES data field (NCES_CODE) into different fields with each unique identifier type (e.g. separate NCES codes and FSCS codes into two different data fields. Currently this field contains a mixture of school and library identifiers. We recommend that this field be a separate field for each respective unique identifier.
- Require that, when possible, respective unique identifiers are assigned to all library entities receiving service. Require that all applications involving:
 - a public library or public library outlet provide an FSCS codes, which is a unique identifier for public libraries and public library outlets. For more information see IMLS, Public Library Survey (PLS).

- an academic library provide the identification code assigned by NCES to the institution. For more information see NCES, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
- Add an additional question that asks library and consortial applicants to provide information about the type of library entity receiving service (i.e. public library, school library, academic library, research library, private library, tribal library). Libraries must meet the statutory definition found in the 1996 Library Services and Technology Act (Pub. L. 104-208) (LSTA) and must be libraries or library consortia eligible for assistance from a State library administrative agency under the Library Services and Technology Act of 1996 that do not operate as for-profit businesses and whose budgets are completely separate from any schools, including, but not limited to, elementary, secondary schools, colleges, or universities.
- Validate unique identifiers (i.e. FSCS code) to ensure that library identifiers match those assigned by IMLS or alternatively validate unique identifiers (i.e. FSCS code, the Federal State Cooperative System Public Library Code) to ensure that responses match the format and structure of an FSCS code (example AK0001-001). FSCS Codes are composed of: FSCSKEY and FSCS SEQ. A FSCSKEY is a six character code which uniquely identifies all public library administrative entities. The FSCS SEQ is a three digit code that is uniquely assigned to an outlet associated within a public library administrative entity. A current list of all public library FSCS codes can be found on the IMLS website.
- Consider automatically integrating and associating information from the Public Library Survey (e.g. number of public terminals, legal service area population) or the National Broadband Map (e.g. broadband speed, broadband type) with records by unique identifier (e.g. FSCS code)
- Make “Block4:Discount Calculation Worksheet” section data available online either in bulk or through the Funding Request Data Retrieval Tool (DRT)
- Provide access to downloadable bulk data files for all data currently available in the Funding Request Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) in an open format.
- Consider providing a public API (application programming interface) for USAC internal reporting systems or for the Funding Request Data Retrieval Tool that is available on the USAC website.

Please let me know you have any additional questions. Additional information can be provided upon request.

Thank you,
Justin Grimes