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Schools and Libraries News Brief

March 10, 2006

Funding Year 2005 Waves

USAC will release Wave 39 funding commitment letters on March 15. As of March 10, FY2005 commitments total over $1.35 billion. See Automated Search of Commitments for more information.

Useful Tools: Searching High and Low

It is almost midnight on a Friday, and you need to know the status of one of your applications. USAC's Client Service Bureau is closed. Where do you turn?

To USAC's online search tools, of course. The following examples illustrate types of useful and up-to-date information readily available from your computer at any time.

- Find the status of all of your Form 471 applications for the current funding year. Using your Billed Entity Number and the Funding Year, you can find the up-to-date Form 471 status for each application filed.

- Learn which schools in your town have received funding commitments. The Automated Search of Commitments tool allows you to narrow searches by zip code, applicant name, town, wave number, and many other criteria. For example, a search done today for Funding Year 2005 for all schools and libraries in Little Rock, Arkansas, will yield a printable report of 17 Form 471 applications for a total of $7.7 million in funding commitments.

- Maybe you are interested in finding the total of Universal Service Funds committed to schools and libraries in your state last year. Find the answer in the Cumulative State Totals – 2005. You can tell quickly that schools and libraries in your home state of Texas received $138 million in commitments from the Universal Service Fund in 2005.

- Check to see if your service delivery extension request has been approved. Use your Funding Request Number (FRN) and Funding Year to search in the Funding Request Number Extension Table. This table lists both automatic and requested extensions for non-recurring services. It also provides the last date to invoice for those services. Remember that if the deadline to invoice falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or federal holiday, the deadline becomes the next business day.

- Service providers can use the Form 470 Download Reports and the Form 470 Search Posted to find and download information on Forms 470 posted to the USAC website. The SPIN Contact Search allows service providers to verify their contact information on file with USAC, and the Eligible Services List Searchable Interface allows all usersto easily locate specific information on eligible services.

- A great deal of information can be pulled using the Data Retrieval Tool. You can locate applicants by wave number, category of service, or even a single FRN. For example, you can find that applicants in Minnesota requested 2,380 FRNs totaling $29.9 million for Funding Year 2006. Of those, 1,560, or 65 percent, were FRNs for

Telecommunications Services. This tool also can tell you that 200 FRNs for Basic Maintenance were submitted from the state of Hawaii. The Data Retrieval Tool is updated nightly.

Data from many of these tools can be downloaded in other formats for use in spreadsheet applications or databases. If you still have a question, you can reach the Client Service Bureau Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. (ET) at (888) 203-8100.

Hurricane Katrina Universal Service Fund Relief

On March 1, 2006, the FCC issued an order extending the Funding Year 2006 filing window to September 30, 2006, for eligible applicants "directly affected" by Hurricane Katrina. (Note that because September 30 falls on a Saturday, the special window will be open until 11:59 p.m. EDT on Monday, October 2).

Much of the guidance for filing applications within the special window remains the same for directly affected applicants granted relief in the Katrina USF order released on October 14, 2005. Specifically:

- Funding requests must only be used to restore networks to pre-Hurricane Katrina levels. Applicants must be directly affected by Hurricane Katrina to qualify for this relief.

- Applicants can rely on existing contracts if they comply with program rules, or they can file new Forms 470.

- Applicants will be required to file both Forms 470 and 471 on paper.

- Directly affected applicants can apply for both Priority 1 and Priority 2 services for FY2006 and will be eligible for a 90% discount.

- New Forms 470 must be POSTED to the USAC website NO LATER THAN September 4, 2006, for the applicant to wait 28 days and then file a Form 471 before the close of the special window. Applicants must allow enough time for their paper Forms 470 to be received and data entered by USAC, then posted to the USAC website.

- Forms 471 must be received or postmarked by 11:59 p.m. on October 2, 2006.

See the Katrina-USF website for more information.

Tip: Prepare for Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) Review of Your FY2006 Form 471

In a future issue of the News Brief, we will provide more specific information on how to prepare for PIA review. For now, make sure all documents relating to your application - your technology plan, your competitive bidding documentation, your discount calculation, and so on - are readily available. Finally, if you have not already done so, file your Item 21 attachment online so that PIA does not have to request it.

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