Back

header

Schools and Libraries News Brief

April 28, 2006

Commitments for Funding Years 2006 and 2005

Funding Year 2006. USAC will release FY2006 Wave 2 funding commitment decision letters (FCDLs) May 2. Wave 1, dated April 26, included over $126 million in commitments for approved Priority 1 requests (Telecommunications Services and Internet Access).

Funding Year 2005. USAC will release FY2005 Wave 46 funding commitment decision letters May 3. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance funding requests at 86% and above. As of April 28, FY2005 commitments total over $1.63 billion.

USAC will continue to issue weekly funding commitment waves for both FY2006 and FY2005. The commitments in funding waves are available on USAC's website the same afternoon that the FCDLs are dated and mailed. You can check to see if you have a commitment in either funding year by using USAC's Automated Search of Commitments tool.

USAC Opens Registration for Expanded Training Sessions

In order to allow you to plan well in advance of this year's training events, USAC has opened registration for its ABC's of the Schools and Libraries training. The first session will be held in Washington, DC in early September. Based on your feedback, USAC has increased the number of venues, all at convenient, airport-accessible locations, and has expanded the content to meet the diverse needs of participants. This year, USAC will offer training in:

- **Washington, DC** – Washington Marriott, Washington, DC – September 7-8
- **Northeast** – The Hilton Boston Logan Airport Hotel, Boston, MA – September 12-13
- **West Coast** – Seattle Marriott Sea-Tac Airport, Seattle, WA – September 20-21
- **Midwest** – Renaissance St. Louis Hotel Airport, St. Louis, MO – September 27-28
- **Southeast** – Hilton Atlanta Airport, Atlanta, GA – October 3-4
- **South Central** – Doubletree Hotel Houston Downtown, Houston, TX – October 11-12

The two-day training sessions will include breakout sessions for beginners, service providers, and participants interested in specific topics. Sessions also will include the latest updates on program rules, help applicants navigate the application process, and provide more time to respond to specific questions. All six training sessions will cover the same information, so you should select the location and date that is most convenient for you.

Day 1 of the training will run from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Day 2 will be from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. A light breakfast will be offered each morning and lunch will be provided on Day 1.

A detailed agenda as well as links to helpful training materials will be featured in a future News Brief and will be posted on our website this summer.

To register go to the Schools and Libraries home page and click on the 2006 Schools and Libraries Training link. When you choose a training location, you will be directed to the registration information page. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis, and space is limited to the first 200 registrations for each location. Because space is limited, please register for only one training session to allow space for other participants. Remember to retain your confirmation number once you register as it will be needed to make any changes. If you need to update your personal information or cancel your registration, email usactraining@usac.org or call 410-757-0905 and have your confirmation number handy.

What is a Consortium?

Schools, school districts, and/or libraries commonly form a consortium to maximize the use of Universal Service support. A consortium allows participating eligible entities to share services

and resources throughout a region or state. When establishing a consortium, the consortium members must designate a consortium leader. The leader, which may be an ineligible entity, acts as a representative for all members and files the application on behalf of the other members.

How should the consortium relationship be documented?

There are several ways to document the relationship between the consortium leader and the members. The most common is a [Letter of Agency](#) (LOA), which must be signed by each member before the Form 471 is certified. The LOA establishes an official relationship between a consortium member and the consortium leader and authorizes the consortium leader to represent the consortium member. Project agreements or contracts could also demonstrate this authorization. The LOA or other authorizing documentation must include the following:

- The name of the consortium leader.
- The name of the consortium member and signature and title of the person who is authorizing the filing of the application on the member's behalf (usually, a school or library employee).
- The consortium member's signature date, which must be prior to the Form 471 certification postmark date.
- A specified timeframe during which the consortium leader is authorized to represent the consortium member. While the LOA can cover a multi-year period, it cannot be indefinite or open-ended (for example, "until terminated by either party").
- The type of services that are covered by the LOA. This can be as general as "All Eligible Services" or as specific as "Basic Phone Service," but it must be explicitly stated.

If the consortium was established by statute or regulation and participation by schools and libraries is mandatory, the consortium leader can submit a copy of the statute or regulation instead of individual LOAs.

USAC has posted a [Sample Letter of Agency](#) for reference and use.

What are the responsibilities of the consortium leader?

The consortium leader is responsible for ensuring that necessary certifications are made and for responding to USAC inquiries on behalf of the members.

For example, the consortium leader can be an entity or person that files the application and makes certifications on the Form 471. When the consortium leader makes the Form 471 certifications, the leader is certifying that:

- Each consortium member has a properly prepared technology plan.
- Each member has secured access to all the necessary resources to make effective use of the requested discounts.
- Each member has complied with state and local procurement laws as well as all Schools and Libraries Program rules.

The leader may be asked, during Program Integrity Assurance review, to provide documentation of these certifications.

During consortia application reviews, USAC will ask the consortium leader to present the consortium members' LOAs or other documentation to demonstrate that the consortium member was aware – and had expressly authorized – that discounted services would be sought on its behalf. If the LOA is not available, or was dated after the Form 471 was certified, it can result in a reduction to or denial of the funding request.

The consortium leader also must be responsible for ensuring that the services for which the consortium requests discounts are the services that the members have authorized in the LOAs. Failure to do so may result in the denial or modification of funding requests for consortium members.

The consortium leader also must collect a signed Form 479, *Certification by Administrative Authority to Billed Entity of Compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act*, from each

consortium member prior to completing the Form 486, *Receipt of Service Confirmation Form*. The Form 479 is not required if the Form 486 indicates funding was only for Telecommunications Services. The consortium leader should not submit Forms 479 to USAC but should retain them for its records.

Tip: If You Qualify, File Your Form 486 Early and File It Online

Applicants that have received an FY2006 FCDL, and whose FY2006 services will begin in July, should consider filing a Form 486 before school closes for the summer break. To file an FY2006 Form 486 early:

- USAC must have issued an FCDL with a positive commitment for the Funding Request Number (FRN) reported on the Form 486.
- The applicant must confirm with the named service provider that services will begin on the Service Start Date reported on the Form 486.
- The Service Start Date must be during the month of July 2006.
- The applicant must be able to make all of the relevant certifications in Block 4 of the Form 486 in advance of the date of the start of discounted services.

Remember that you can file Form 486 online and, if you have a Personal Identification Number (PIN), you can e-certify the form. E-filing and e-certification reduce errors and speed processing.

You may download and print copies of Schools and Libraries News Briefs on USACs website. You may subscribe to or unsubscribe from this news brief. For program information, please visit the Schools and Libraries area of the USAC website, submit a question to USAC, or call us toll-free at 1-888-203-8100. Feel free to forward this news brief to any interested parties.

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Back