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## Schools and Libraries News Brief

September 29, 2006

**TIP OF THE WEEK:** Use the [Data Retrieval Tool \(DRT\)](#) on the USAC website to verify that your Form 486 has been successfully processed. If the DRT shows an entry in the Form 486 Service Start Date field ("486 SSD") for a Funding Request Number (FRN), your form has been successfully processed and USAC can pay invoices for that FRN.

### Commitments for Funding Years 2006 and 2005

**Funding Year 2006.** USAC will release FY2006 Wave 24 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) October 3. As of September 29, FY2006 commitments total just under \$896 million for approved Priority 1 requests (Telecommunications Services and Internet Access).

**Funding Year 2005.** USAC will release FY2005 Wave 59 FCDLs October 4. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance funding requests at 81% and above. As of September 29, FY2005 commitments total just under \$1.85 billion.

USAC will continue to issue weekly funding commitment waves. After noon on the date that the FCDLs are mailed, you can check to see if you have a commitment by using USAC's [Automated Search of Commitments](#) tool.

### Technology Planning Questions from the Field

As part of USAC's follow-up activities for the [regional training sessions](#) being conducted around the country this fall, answers to selected questions from the training sessions will be included in News Briefs to provide more information on the topics being discussed. Below are questions received from attendees on various aspects of technology planning.

#### **Q. For purposes of E-rate, what is the date of my technology plan?**

**A.** Your technology plan has two important dates. They are:

**Creation date.** This is the date that your technology plan is first created or written. It must be before the date that your Form 470 is filed, as the Form 470 must be based on the information contained in the technology plan.

**Approved date.** This is the date that your technology plan is approved by a USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver. Your approval letter or other communication of approval, such as an email, contains your approved date. Your plan is considered to be in effect from the approved date until the date it expires.

#### **Q. My technology plan expires on June 30, 2007. Do I need a new plan for FY2007?**

**A.** Yes. Your technology plan must be in effect during the period you **receive** discounted services. Having an approved plan when you file your Form 471 is not sufficient if that plan expires before the start of the funding year for which you are applying.

#### **Q. Do I need a new technology plan if I want to get something that's not in my current plan?**

**A.** It depends. If the products, services, or other technologies that you want are really just add-ons to your current plan, you should just update your plan as appropriate. However, if you are

planning a new initiative – something that moves you in a new direction that is not contemplated in your current plan – you should amend your plan and submit it to your Technology Plan Approver for review and approval.

**Q. Do I need to include voice services in my technology plan?**

**A.** It is a good idea to include all of the products and services you use to deliver educational or library services – even those that are not eligible for E-rate discounts – in your technology plan. Remember that your budget must reflect not only your ability to pay your share of the cost of discounted services, but the necessary resources not eligible for discounts (e.g., computers, software, electrical capacity, training) that you must have to make effective use of your discounted services.

For example, if you plan to offer a Homework Hotline, your telephone services are eligible for discounts but you will need voice telecommunications infrastructure (such as telephone handsets or possibly a PBX system) to provide this service. Your technology plan should reflect both the eligible and the ineligible products and services necessary for you to achieve your goals and strategies for delivering educational or library services.

**Q. My library is part of a library consortium. Can the library consortium have one technology plan that covers all of the members of the consortium, or does each member have to have its own plan?**

**A.** A library consortium technology plan may be used to fulfill the requirement for the individual member libraries to have a technology plan if the library consortium plan:

- Supports and validates the services requested
- Is based on a collaborative planning process
- Follows the guidelines set out in the four technology planning scenarios outlined below:
  - Libraries and/or library consortia that apply only for [basic telephone service](#) are not required to have a technology plan.
  - A library that applies for discounts on services for its own library outlet(s) may have a plan written at the library level.
  - Library consortia that apply for discounts on services that are shared by a group of libraries may have a plan written at the consortium level as long as the plan supports and validates the requested services.
  - Libraries that apply for discounts on services for their own library outlet(s), which are part of a larger initiative supported by the library consortium, may have a plan written at the library consortium level, as long as the plan supports and validates the requested services.

If the library consortium does not meet the above guidelines, a library consortium technology plan is not sufficient for the purposes of the Schools and Libraries program.

For more information on library consortia and technology planning, refer to [Technology Planning](#) and [Library Consortium – Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the USAC website.

**Q. I am a non-public school. I have been unable to contact any of the USAC-certified Technology Plan Approvers listed for my state. Can another organization approve my plan?**

**A.** In general, state education agencies, such as state departments of education, approve school technology plans. Similarly, state library agencies approve library plans. However, in some states or for some entities, other organizations have been certified by USAC to approve technology plans.

The [Tech Plan Approver Locator tool](#) searches for certified technology plan approvers in the same state in which the applicant is located. If you cannot locate an appropriate approver – or if the organization you would like to have approve your technology plan is not yet listed in the tool – contact USAC using the [Submit a Question](#) feature. Be sure to include your Billed Entity Number (BEN), the state in which your school or library is located, and your contact information.

**Reminder: FY2006 Hurricane Katrina Window Closes Monday**

The extended FY2006 filing window for [applicants directly affected by Hurricane Katrina](#) will close on Monday, October 2. To apply under this guidance, directly affected applicants must postmark the following on or before October 2:

- FY2006 Forms 471 and/or
- Requests for waivers of the [Two-in-Five Rule](#) for FY2006.

Refer to USAC's [Hurricane Katrina website](#) for more information.

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