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Schools and Libraries News Brief

November 3, 2006

TIP OF THE WEEK: If you missed the October 30 invoicing deadline, request an invoice deadline extension and wait for approval before you submit an invoice to USAC. [Invoice Deadlines and Extension Requests](#) contains information on how to request an invoice deadline extension.

Commitments for Funding Years 2006 and 2005

Funding Year 2006. USAC will release FY2006 Wave 29 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) November 7. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance funding requests at 90%. As of November 3, FY2006 commitments total just over \$1.33 billion.

Funding Year 2005. USAC will release FY2005 Wave 63 FCDLs November 8. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance funding requests at 81% and above. As of November 3, 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.

Getting Ready for the FY2007 Application Cycle

As announced in the [October 20 SL News Brief](#), the FY2007 Form 471 application filing window will open at noon EST on Tuesday, **November 14, 2006** and close at 11:59 pm EST on Wednesday, **February 7, 2007**. USAC will issue its annual Letter to the Field shortly. Meanwhile, we wanted to remind you of these important deadlines and other information for you to keep in mind as you begin the process of applying for discounts.

File early. Over half of the Forms 471 for a funding year are filed in the last week of the filing window. When you are in a hurry to fill out an application in time to meet a receipt or postmark deadline, it is very easy to overlook crucial information that may slow down our review of your application. Also, the Client Service Bureau is very busy as the window deadline approaches and it will be harder for you to request new entity numbers, copies of forms, or specific program information the longer you wait.

File online. The [online filing system](#) for Form 470 and Form 471 has been built to alert filers to common errors or possible inconsistencies in the data they provide as they are filling out their forms. You can use the full version of the form or an interview version that fills out the form for you using a simple question-and-answer format.

Make sure to temporarily allow pop-ups in your Internet browser when you are filing online, as many of these built-in reminders and error messages occur via pop-ups. The online system also delivers your form to USAC quickly and completely and allows you to print a copy of your form. You can also start a form online, save your work, and come back to finish it later.

Certify online. USAC's [Personal Identification Number \(PIN\) system](#) will automatically issue a PIN to the authorized person filing a paper form if he or she does not already have one. That PIN can be used on any subsequent program form. This means that, if you are filing your first Form 470, you will have a PIN in time to certify your associated Form 471.

The certification process is safe and secure. You will receive a confirmation number as verification of your certification and you don't need to send USAC a paper copy of your certification page.

Be mindful of program deadlines. Here are the two deadlines to keep in mind for the upcoming filing window:

- **January 10, 2007. This is the last possible day that a Form 470 can be posted on the USAC website** and still meet the 28-day posting requirement for your competitive bidding process. However, if you wait until this day, then you must do the following on the last day of the filing window:
 - Select your service provider
 - Sign and date your contract (for contracted services) — remember that your service provider must also have signed and dated your contract
 - Sign, date, and submit your Form 471

If you file your Form 470 on paper, remember that you must allow sufficient time for your form to be data entered and posted to the website. It is your responsibility to meet the 28-day requirement.

- **February 7, 2007 at 11:59 pm EST. This is the last possible day that a Form 471 can be received by USAC or postmarked** and still be considered as filed within the window. Remember that USAC must consider ALL applications filed within the window (Priority 1 and Priority 2) before considering any applications filed outside the window.

Review program guidance materials. Some program information is consistent from year to year. Other information – for example, the eligibility of certain products and services – has changed. Before you begin, be sure to review all relevant program guidance, including the following:

- [Technology Planning](#) provides guidance on the technology planning process. Your technology plan must be written before the Form 470 is filed; must contain the five elements; must cover all 12 months of the funding year; and must be approved by a USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver before the Form 486 is filed or services start, whichever is earlier.
- [Competitive Bidding](#) covers all aspects of the competitive bidding process. Your competitive bidding process must be open and fair, the price of the eligible goods and services must be the primary factor in your evaluation, and you must be able to document your service provider selection process.
- The [FY2007 Eligible Services List](#) provides specific details on eligible and ineligible products and services for Funding Year 2007. Note that the eligibility of some products and services has changed from the FY2006 Eligible Services List.
- [Contract Guidance](#) includes information on contracts, including the specific situations that can arise when using a state master contract. Remember that both the applicant and service provider must sign and date a contract.

Ask for assistance. If you have questions, please contact the Client Service Bureau by email using [Submit a Question](#) or call toll-free at 1-888-203-8100. In addition to program information, they can provide information on the status of your forms.

FY2005 Form 486 Deadline Relief

In the [Alaska Gateway order](#) (DA 06-1871, released September. 14, 2006), the FCC provided relief to certain applicants that did not timely file a Form 486. The FCC has directed USAC to apply the guidance in this order to FY2005 applicants as well as FY2006 applicants.

This means that the following two groups of FY2005 applicants will get relief under this order:

- Applicants that filed a Form 486 after the deadline, and
- Applicants that never filed a Form 486

USAC is working to implement this guidance and to provide appropriate notification to the applicants affected. Please watch the [Schools and Libraries area of the website](#) and future issues of the SL News Brief for further details.

Note that this order does not provide relief if the Service Start Date on a Form 486 was adjusted due to a program rule violation (e.g., the services were not covered by an approved Technology Plan or the services were delivered during a period when the applicant was not in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act).

Website Updates

USAC is working hard to post or update website documents that provide guidance or other assistance to help applicants during the upcoming FY2007 application process. We will post updates in News Briefs to point users to these documents.

In the last two weeks, USAC has posted the following:

- The [Application Process Flow Chart](#) is a visual depiction of the application process for both applicants and service providers. The latest version of this chart, which was made available in a printed format during the regional training sessions, has been posted in the [Reference Area](#) and as a related document in the [Overview of the Program](#).
- The responsibilities of a consortium leader are detailed in [Consortia – Lead Member Responsibilities](#). This document is slightly revised from the version that was previously posted on the website.
- Attendees at the USAC regional trainings have asked that additional materials presented during the training be posted to the [2006 Fall Training Agenda and Presentation Materials](#). The first of these is the Beginners' Presentation that was offered to attendees who indicated that they were new to the program. We are looking at the group activities presented during the training to see if we can make electronic versions of those available as well.

You may download and print copies of [Schools and Libraries News Briefs](#) on USAC's 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](#), 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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