

[Back](#) [header](#)

Schools and Libraries News Brief

January 26, 2007

FY2007 WINDOW COUNTDOWN

Days to window close	12
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Forms 471 filed to date	8,735
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TIP OF THE WEEK: If you have not received a service delivery extension or an invoice deadline extension, then this Monday, January 29, is the deadline for invoicing USAC for FY2005 recurring and non-recurring services. Plan to request an invoice deadline extension if your invoice is not already in process.

Commitments for Funding Year 2006

USAC will release FY2006 Wave 41 FCDLs January 30. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance funding requests at 87% and above. As of January 26, FY2006 commitments total just under \$1.69 billion.

USAC will continue to issue weekly funding commitment waves for FY2006. 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.

New and Revised Letters

USAC issues a number of letters to communicate with applicants and service providers about program information. In general, letters perform one or more of the following functions:

- To confirm the filing of a form or request and – in some cases – to provide an opportunity to change certain information on that form
- To inform applicants and service providers of a USAC decision
- To notify applicants of a specific action or action required, usually accompanied by a specific deadline for a response.

USAC is updating some existing letters and is also issuing some new letters based on recent guidance provided by the FCC. Following is a list of those letters, together with a description of their functions and actual or estimated first issue dates:

Receipt Notification Letter – REVISED

Each year, after a Form 470 is posted to the USAC website, USAC issues a [Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter \(RNL\)](#) to the applicant identified in Block 1 of the form. USAC has substantially revised this letter for Funding Year 2007 based on guidance in the [Bishop Perry order](#) (FCC 06-54, released May 19, 2006). The RNL text has been reduced to two pages and the Form 470 RNL Report has been expanded to list in detail the specific data entered on the form. The format of this report allows applicants to easily report any allowable corrections of [ministerial and clerical errors](#) they find on the form. Applicants are given 20 days (15 days plus five days to allow for mail receipt) to report any allowable corrections.

On November 29, 2006, USAC began issuing the new version of the RNL to all applicants that filed a Form 470 for FY2007, even if USAC had already issued them the earlier version of the

RNL. From that point forward, USAC issued only the revised version of the RNL for each new Form 470 posted to the USAC website.

Receipt Acknowledgment Letter – REVISED

Each year, after a Form 471 is posted to the USAC website and certified online or on paper, USAC issues a Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) to the applicant identified in Block 1 of the form and the service provider. USAC has substantially revised the applicant letter for Funding Year 2007 based on guidance in the Bishop Perry order. The RAL text has been reduced to two pages and the Form 471 RAL Funding Requests Report has been expanded to list in detail the specific data entered on the form. The format of this report allows applicants to easily report any allowable corrections to ministerial and clerical errors they find on the form. Applicants are given 20 days (15 days plus five days to allow for mail receipt) to report these corrections.

USAC plans to begin issuing the revised version of the RAL in early February. The sample RAL on the website will be updated when USAC issues the first batch of revised RALs.

Notification of Form 470 Posted but No Associated Form 471 – NEW

In accordance with guidance provided in the Bishop Perry order, USAC is required to notify applicants when a Form 470 is posted but an associated Form 471 is not submitted. This new letter provides that notification and gives applicants 20 days to submit a Form 471.

January 10, 2007, was the last day to post a Form 470 and still meet the FY2007 Form 471 window filing requirements. On January 11, USAC identified all applicants that posted a timely Form 470 but had not yet submitted a Form 471. On January 18, USAC issued a copy of this letter for each timely Form 470 to the contact person identified in Block 1 of the Form 470. You must remember, however, that applicants are required to wait 28 days after their Form 470 posting date before selecting a service provider, signing a contract (if applicable), and signing and submitting a Form 471.

Notification of Form 471 with No Certification – NEW

Also following guidance from the Bishop Perry order, applicants that post a Form 471 by the close of the filing window but do not certify it must be notified by USAC and given 20 days to certify the form. This letter will provide that notification.

Shortly after the filing window closes on February 7, USAC will identify all uncertified Forms 471 and send each Block 1 Billed Entity a copy of this letter. These applicants will be required to file their certifications on paper. (An electronic certification submitted after the close of the window will automatically generate an out-of-window letter.) Keep in mind also that this letter will go out before all paper certifications postmarked in-window have been processed. If you postmarked a certification in-window and want to verify that USAC has received and processed it, you can check the status of your Form 471 by

- Entering your Billed Entity Number (BEN) and Funding Year in the [Form 471 Status Tool](#), or
- Entering your Form 471 Applicant Number in the [Form 471 Application Display](#).

In either case, the status "Certified – In Window" means that your certification has been processed and considered as filed within the filing window.

Urgent Reminder: Your Form 486 May Be Late – NEW

Following guidance in the [Alaska Gateway order](#) (DA 06-1871, released September 14, 2006), USAC will use the date of the Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) and the service start date reported on the Form 471 (471SSD) to identify applicants that may be late in filing or certifying a Form 486. This letter will notify these applicants that they have 20 days to file a Form 486 or a Form 486 certification. For Forms 486 certified within this 20-day period, USAC will not reset the associated service start dates nor reduce funding for recurring services (assuming that program rules affecting service start dates have not been violated). The first batch of these letters will be mailed January 26.

Forms 486 and Form 486 certifications can be filed online or on paper, as long as they are received or postmarked before the close of the 20-day response window. After that deadline has passed, USAC will reset the service start date as appropriate once a Form 486 is filed.

Remember also that the 471SSD need not be the service start date reported on the Form 486. If the actual service start date is later than the 471SSD, your Form 486 may not be late at the time this letter is generated. In such cases, make sure to file your Form 486 within 120 days of the later of (1) the date on your FCDL, or (2) the service start date you will report on your Form 486 to avoid any adjustments. For more information on Form 486 and service start dates, refer to the [Form 486 Instructions](#).

Form 486 Rejection Letter – NEW

USAC reviews a certain number of Forms 486 for compliance with technology planning requirements. If an applicant has violated a program rule related to technology planning, USAC will reject the Form 486. The two most common examples of program rule violations are:

- A technology plan was not written ("created") before the Form 470 was posted.
- The technology plan was not approved by a USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver before the Form 486 was filed or services started, whichever was earlier.

This letter notifies applicants that a Form 486 has been rejected. USAC began issuing these letters in August 2006.

If the reason for rejection can be corrected – for example, if the applicant can now submit its technology plan for approval and receive a technology plan approval letter – the applicant can file a new Form 486 based on the date that it came into compliance with program rules.

Please note that the [Data Retrieval Tool \(DRT\)](#) will still show a Form 486 Service Start Date if a Form 486 has been received and processed **even if** that form later fails a technology plan review. We are working to modify the DRT so that the service start date will only show if the form has passed this review.

HATS Program Meets with Early Success

The first visits under the Helping Applicants to Succeed (HATS) pilot program of USAC's Site Visit Initiative occurred last week. Applicants that are chosen to receive these visits have had difficulty in filing successful applications for the Schools and Libraries Program. No preparation is necessary, as the applicant is not required to produce records or demonstrate equipment. Rather, the visit covers general program information and provides specific details about the specific parts of the application process where the applicant has not succeeded in the past. The [October 13, 2006 News Brief](#) provides more information on this pilot program.

Applicants visited in the first week of this pilot program were enthusiastic about receiving outreach targeted to their specific situation and help with available tools and resources that will enhance their participation in the program.

Videos of Atlanta Training Available

USAC has posted a website link to videos of some of the presentations made at USAC's regional training session in Atlanta on October 3–4, 2006. To access a video recording, go to the [Outreach and Training page](#) and follow the link marked "Training Presentation Videos."

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[Back](#)