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Schools and Libraries News Brief

February 2, 2007

FY2007 WINDOW COUNTDOWN	
Days to window close	5
Forms 471 filed to date	15,186

TIP OF THE WEEK: Ask your questions and file and certify your program forms online during non-peak hours. The Client Service Bureau and the online filing system are busiest between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. EST.

Commitments for Funding Years 2006

USAC will release FY2006 Wave 42 FCDLs February 6. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance funding requests at 87% and above. As of February 2, FY2006 commitments total just under $1.72 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.

FY2007 Filing Window Closes Next Week

The FY2007 Form 471 application filing window closes next Wednesday, February 7, at 11:59 p.m. EST. Some applicants have already filed one or more Forms 471. However, with about 40,000 Forms 471 expected in total and just over 15,000 filed, USAC expects that most applicants will be filing on or close to the deadline.

Remember that you must wait at least 28 days after your Form 470 is POSTED to the USAC website before you

- Select a service provider
- Sign and date a contract
- Sign and date your Form 471.

Your Form 471 must be received or postmarked by 11:59 p.m. on February 7.

Following are a few tips to improve this year's application experience:

Sort through and store your internal documentation now. In the rush to complete your application, you may neglect to preserve documentation that you may need to produce during application reviews, technology plan reviews, site visits, audits, or other USAC activities. Demonstrating compliance with program rules is an important part of the application process.

While the list below is not complete – and some of the documents are only suggestions – it will help you think through your compliance with document retention requirements. Remember that you must retain documents for five years after the last date to receive service on the associated funding commitment.

We recommend that you store copies of the following in a place where you can easily retrieve them:

- The technology plan that you wrote ("created") before you filed your Form 470. While this can be a draft document, you should indicate the date that you created the plan on the first page and/or in a header or footer. (Once your technology plan has been approved, you should also keep a copy of the approved technology plan and your approval letter from your USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver.)
- If you hired a consultant, the consulting agreement or Letter of Agency (LOA) with the consultant.
- Request for Proposals (RFP), if one was issued.
- A printout of at least the first page of the Form 470 that provided the basis for your funding request(s), especially if your entity wasn't the entity listed in Block 1 (e.g., if you are a school or library purchasing from a state master contract where the state filed the Form 470). The first page includes the Form 470 Application Number, the Applicant Form Identifier, and the contact information provided for the contact person, all of which may be important for reference.
- Your plan for evaluating the bids you received.
- The bids themselves, both those that won and those that lost.
- The list of your evaluation criteria, including the weight given to each criterion. Remember that the price of the products and services that are eligible for discounts must be weighted most heavily.
- The results of your evaluation process, including your rationale for selecting the winning bid. If you disqualified one or more bidders, you should also retain documentation showing the rationale for disqualification.
- A memo to your file in the event that you received only one bid – or no bids.
- Your contract, if you and your service provider signed one.
- Your contract extension, if you and your service provider signed one.
- Any documents that show compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). As with technology plans, you may not need to be in compliance (or working toward compliance) until your FY2007 services start, but you should store any documents you have now, such as a notice of a public meeting or hearing on your Internet safety policy.
- Any documents you used to calculate your discount percentage – for example, your National School Lunch Program (NLSP) forms, printouts of NSLP data on your state's website, or alternative discount mechanism documents such as surveys.
- Any documents supporting cost allocation of ineligible entities, products, or services.

Verify (and update) your contact information. USAC uses the contact information on each form – and the preferred mode of contact – to contact you with questions about that form. This becomes especially important if your contact information changes and you don't notify USAC. Imagine this chain of events:

1. Your contact person quits.
2. USAC attempts to contact that person using the preferred mode of contact indicated on the form.
3. The voicemail, email, or fax message from USAC goes through with no indication of a problem (such as a bounced email) or change of employee (such as a voicemail greeting from someone other than the contact person).
4. USAC assumes that successful contact has been made as described in its deadline for information request procedures and follows those procedures through the required 15-day process with no response.
5. Lacking a response, USAC continues its review with the information it has on hand, which is not sufficient to fully fund the application.

If your contact information – including preferred mode of contact – changes, notify USAC of the contact information change so that USAC can update the information on your form(s).

Check and recheck your entries, especially those for the entities receiving services and the dollars associated with your funding request(s). Even though you will have an opportunity to correct certain errors on your Forms 470 and 471, filing the correct information the first time benefits everyone. You won't have to take the time to file corrections, and USAC can proceed with your application review using the correct information.

Verify the Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) you cite on each funding request. Service providers can have more than one SPIN for regulatory, accounting, service type, or other reasons. Also, if you transpose or mis-key a digit when you enter a SPIN, you could inadvertently enter a valid SPIN for a different service provider. Again, USAC has processes in place for correcting these kinds of errors but the correction process takes time and may delay application review, funding decisions, or invoice payments.

If you are requesting services in the Telecommunications Services category, use the SPIN Contact Search Tool to see if your service provider is eligible to provide these services. (The line for your service provider will contain a "Y" in the "Eligible Telecomm Provider" column if the service provider is a telecommunications carrier.)

Finally, if the service provider you have chosen does not yet have a SPIN, call the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 1-888-203-8100 and they will provide you with a solution that will allow you to complete your Form 471 funding request. Your service provider must have a SPIN before USAC can make a funding commitment but it is not a requirement for the Form 471.

Print a copy of your forms. USAC maintains the data from your forms in a database but data entry errors do occasionally occur. Having a printed copy of your forms in hand may help if the data you see later online differ from the data you submitted.

Certify your forms. Again, even though USAC will give you an opportunity to supply any missing certifications for Forms 470 and 471, certifying the forms now will speed the processing of your application and obviate additional contacts during application review. If you have a Personal Identification Number, certify your forms online right after you submit them.

File your Item 21 attachment. The Item 21 attachment is the description of service that must accompany each Form 471 Block 5 funding request. Although the Item 21 attachment is not a window filing requirement, USAC cannot begin the review of your application until you have submitted it. You can file online by clicking on the "Item 21 Attachment" button in the Form 471 column of the Apply Online page and then entering your Form 471 application number and security code.

Your service provider can assist you with the completion your Item 21 attachment. In fact, you should plan to share a copy of your final submission with your service provider to assist with invoicing and other processes.

Ask for help if you need it. CSB will be open during both the weekend before and the evening of the filing window to assist with last-minute questions. CSB's regular hours are weekdays, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. EST. CSB's extended filing window hours are:

Saturday, February 3	9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. EST
Sunday, February 4	9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. EST
Wednesday, February 7	8:00 a.m. – 11:59 p.m. EST

To reach CSB, call 1-888-203-8100. Call volumes are significantly higher during the last few days of the filing window, so you will generally reach an agent more quickly if you call during the extended weekend hours or on weekdays before 11:00 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m. EST.

Important Reminder for Pre-Kindergarten Schools (Including Preschools and Head Start Centers)

In order to be eligible to receive support from the Schools and Libraries program, all entities must meet the federal and state definitions of elementary or secondary school. This means that the state must first consider you to be a school and then USAC will determine if pre-Kindergarten schools in your state are eligible. The Eligibility Table for Non-traditional K-12 Students and Facilities provides a listing of the states that include pre-Kindergarten in their definition of elementary school.

It is possible that some pre-Kindergarten programs in a state will be able to meet both parts of the test and therefore be eligible for funding, while others will not. If you are, for example, a Head Start Center that is not considered a school in your state, you are not eligible for funding, even if the Eligibility Table indicates that pre-Kindergarten facilities are eligible in your state. Please check with your State Department of Education if you are unsure whether the state considers you to be a school.

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.

Please do not reply to this email directly, as it was sent from an unattended mailbox.

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