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Schools and Libraries News Brief

September 7, 2007

TIP OF THE WEEK: Respond promptly to Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) requests for information. Remember that [Summer Deferrals](#) end on September 10, 2007 and you must provide requested information within 15 days.

SL News Brief Starts Its Third Year

Welcome to the third year of the Schools and Libraries News Brief. We will continue to provide you with up-to-the-minute news on developments in the Schools and Libraries program along with guidance materials that will help both applicants and service providers through the application process.

We email SL News Briefs to subscribers on Fridays. If you are not receiving your own copy of the News Brief, we encourage you to [subscribe](#). You can also download a copy of any issues you miss from the [Schools and Libraries News Brief page](#), which you can view by topic or by date.

Commitments for Funding Year 2007

Funding Year 2007. USAC will release FY2007 Wave 19 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) September 11. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance requests at 83% and above. As of September 7, FY2007 commitments total just over \$1.26 billion.

On the day after 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 to Get Ready for FY2008

No, the headline is not a typo. Although we are only a few months away from the opening of the FY2008 Form 471 application filing window, many applicants and service providers should think first about cleaning up any remaining issues from past funding years. Below are some questions you should ask yourself even before you start preparing for FY2008.

Have I invoiced USAC for all FY2006 recurring services?

In general, the invoicing deadline for FY2006 recurring services is October 29, 2007 – less than two months from now. Many applicants and service providers wait until the last minute to prepare the final invoice (BEAR Form 472 or SPI Form 474) for FY2006, which then means notification letters are delayed because of the sudden and large influx of forms that USAC must process and review.

Why not get your paperwork together and invoice USAC now? Here are some things to remember:

- **File invoices online if possible.** Applicants with a Personal Identification Number can [file a BEAR Form online](#). Service providers with an E-cert ID and a password [can file a SPI online](#).
- **If you file on paper, use the current forms.** If you are filing a [BEAR Form](#) or [SPI Form](#) on paper, you must print and fill out **the April 2007 versions** of these forms. The earlier versions are no longer being accepted. **THIS INCLUDES THE SERVICE PROVIDER SIGNATURE PAGE (PAGE 4) OF THE BEAR FORM.** Using the old forms will significantly delay processing.
- **Prepare BEAR Forms in plenty of time for service provider review and approval.** If applicants wait until late October to file their BEAR Form online or on paper, their service providers may not have time to review and approve the forms before the deadline. Applicants should ask their service providers how much lead time

they need to review forms, and service providers should remind applicants of their required lead time as well. Applicants filing BEAR Forms online for the first time should also contact the affected service providers and make sure they know how to log on to the system and review and approve BEAR Forms.

- **Read the form instructions.** Most of the common mistakes on invoices can be avoided if you read and understand the instructions. Again, if you file online, the system populates some related fields and usually provides a warning message if you enter inconsistent information.
- **Use your current contact information and update where necessary.** If USAC has questions about your invoice, we will use the contact information on the invoice to get in touch with you. If we can't get answers to our questions, your invoice may be denied and you will have to resubmit it.
- **Don't file duplicate invoices or line items.** First check your customer bills (the bills sent by the service provider to the applicant) and any previous invoices so that you invoice USAC only for amounts that have not yet been invoiced.
- **Verify the amount of funding remaining on your Funding Request Number (FRN).** If you have invoiced USAC for the entire amount of your FRN, USAC will not pay discounts for any additional services received.

Have I received – or delivered and installed – all eligible non-recurring services?

September 30 following the funding year is generally the deadline for delivery and installation of non-recurring services. While September 30, 2007 is the deadline for most FY2006 non-recurring services, it can also be the extended deadline for services from other funding years.

Again, here are some things to remember:

- **Request a service delivery extension if you need one.** Applicants can, under certain circumstances, request an extension for the delivery and installation of non-recurring services. If September 30, 2007 is your service delivery deadline and you already know that you and your service provider will need more time, review the requirements for a [service delivery extension request](#) and, if you meet the requirements, submit a request to USAC on or before the September 30 deadline.
- **Check the expiration date on your contract and, if necessary, extend your contract and notify USAC using a Form 500.** USAC will not pay for services delivered after the contract expiration date on file.
- **If September 30, 2007 is the last date to receive service, then January 28, 2008 is the last day to invoice USAC for those services.** Don't wait until the last minute to gather customer bills and prepare your invoices.

Have I submitted my FY2007 Form 486?

If your FY2007 FCDL is dated on or before July 1, 2007, your deadline to file Form 486 is probably October 29, 2007. (About two-thirds of the FRNs for a funding year feature July 1 as the service start date, which this year results in an October 29 Form 486 deadline.) As above, many applicants wait until the last minute to file Form 486, causing delays in processing and review at USAC.

Moreover, applicants that wait until the last minute are likely to get confused by USAC's Form 486 reminder letter. USAC now sends out reminder letters to applicants that miss the Form 486 deadline because they either:

- fail to file a Form 486 by the deadline, or
- file a Form 486 online and then fail to certify it by the deadline.

USAC uses the FCDL date and the service start date reported in Item 19 of the Form 471 to determine when a reminder letter should be sent. USAC tries to identify late filers as soon as possible after the calculated Form 486 filing deadline date so that Forms 486 can be filed or certified promptly. This means that applicants that wait until the last minute to file or certify a

form will probably receive one of these letters and become concerned that USAC has not received their form or their certification. Timely filing mitigates this.

Once you have asked yourself these questions and come up with appropriate actions or answers, it's time to start thinking about FY2008. Future News Briefs will walk you through the application process from start to finish.

Fall Training Update

As you can see from the list below, USAC's "Back to the New Basics" fall training starts next week. Several of the host cities still have space and hotel rooms available. The figures below are current as of 9:00 a.m. today.

City	Dates	Registrants	Hotel Cutoff Date
Washington, DC	September 13-14	250	No rooms available
Orlando, FL	September 18-19	250	No rooms available
Boston, MA	September 27-28	191	No rooms available
New Orleans, LA	October 2-3	234	Rooms available
Cleveland, OH	October 9-10	229	September 15
San Francisco, CA	October 17-18	250	September 21
Phoenix, AZ	October 24-25	250	October 2

Once a session has reached 250 registrants, USAC starts a waiting list. If you find that you cannot attend a session after you have registered, please remember to cancel your registration to open a slot for someone else. We also recommend picking a second-choice training session and registering for that as well in case your first choice does not become available.

Remember also that registering with USAC for the training does not automatically reserve a hotel room. You must follow the hotel reservation instructions linked to the training session you want to attend in order to make a hotel reservation. Note that in some cases, the conference room rate may no longer be available.

REMINDER: Beginners sessions are limited to true beginners – those program participants with less than two years' experience with E-rate. Beginners will receive an invitation by email to attend the beginners session at their registered training.

If you have questions, you can direct them to the email address or the telephone number provided on the [2007 Training announcement](#) under "How to Register."

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