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Schools and Libraries News Brief

October 26, 2007

TIP OF THE WEEK: **Monday, October 29 is the deadline for invoicing USAC for FY2006 recurring services and for filing Form 486 for FY2007 services that started July 1, 2007.** If you miss the deadline, you will have to take additional steps to successfully file these forms.

Commitments for Funding Year 2007

Funding Year 2007. USAC will release FY2007 Wave 26 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) October 30. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance requests at 83% and above. As of October 26, FY2007 commitments total just over $1.62 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.

Eligible Services List Issued

The FCC issued Public Notice FCC 07-182 on October 19, 2007. This public notice released the FY2008 Eligible Services List and waived the requirement that the Eligible Services List be published at least 60 days before the commencement of the filing window.

Please review the Public Notice and the Eligible Services List carefully for details on the products and services that will be eligible for discounts for FY2008 applications.

USAC will issue a Special Edition News Brief next week announcing the dates of the FY2008 application filing window.

Tips for Filing Online Forms

Filing program forms online has a number of advantages. The information on the forms gets to USAC quickly and securely. The system provides warning and informational messages to help you finish your form correctly and, when calculations are involved, does the math for you. Also, USAC can make mistakes keying data from paper forms which can result in additional work on the part of the filer to correct the information.

A few tips can help applicants and service providers filing forms online to have a better online experience. These will be collected more formally on the website in the near future but for now, keep in mind the following:

System requirements

You should first check with your technical professionals to find out how to set your computer to the settings we recommend below AND to be sure that these settings are allowable under your system. When USAC gets calls about difficulties filing online applications, changing the settings below often alleviates the problems.

- **Operating system:** Windows 2000 or higher for PCs, OS9 or higher for Macs.
- **Internet browser:** Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher. Netscape is also supported but Safari, Mozilla and other web browsers are not.
- **Cookie settings:** Set to "Automatically" or "Every visit to the page."
- **Firewall settings:** Ports 80 and 443 (https) should be open to Internet traffic. The firewall should be set to allow "headers."
- **Software:** No special software is required. Moreover, there are no longer any application and display functions that depend on Adobe or PDF technology, so users will not have problems with later versions of Adobe Reader.

Here are some other actions that can solve specific problems. Again, check with your technical staff if the recommendation includes a change to existing settings.

- **Turn off pop-up blockers.** Most of the warning and informational messages occur in pop-up windows. If your system blocks these pop-ups, you will lose the benefit of the messages.
- **Clear your temporary Internet files.** Temporary Internet files temporarily save information that you have entered in online forms. If you are filing multiple forms in one session, clear your temporary files after filing each form so that information from an earlier form does not appear in a later form.
- **Enable cookies.** Cookies allow USAC to preserve certain information to make it easier for you to file online during subsequent sessions. Also, cookies allow USAC to track when and where information in your online forms was updated or changed, which in turn helps USAC diagnose the causes of online difficulties.
- **Disable your content advisor.** A content advisor can block the information you have already entered from appearing in an online form if you try to return to the form after saving your work and exiting the system. You should be able to temporarily disable a content advisor while you are working on your online forms, and then enable it again when you turn to other tasks.
- **Use the Tab key to move sequentially through your forms.** On many form pages, the system checks data entered at certain points against information at USAC before the system allows you to continue data entry. (This is why you will sometimes notice that a page appears to "blink" or "hiccup" before you can move to the next field.) If you enter data out of sequence, the system cannot perform the necessary check of your data and may prevent you from continuing.
- **When entering costs, don't use dollar signs or commas.** The system will treat these symbols as digits in a number and may return an error message or display your information incorrectly.

When reporting a problem with an online form to the Client Service Bureau (CSB), first collect and be prepared to provide the following information:

- Details on the system you are using, including the operating system and version, browser and version, and type of computer.
- The action you were performing or trying to perform when the problem occurred.
- If you received an error message, a screen print or copy of the message. (Most keyboards have a "Print Screen" key; you can hit that key and then paste the screen print into a document or an email message. You can also highlight the text of an error message on the screen, copy it, and paste that text into a document or an email.)

If CSB cannot resolve your problem, they will take down your information and escalate it appropriately. Having complete information helps us track down the source of the problem and fix it promptly.

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