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# Schools and Libraries News Brief

**April 18, 2008**

**TIP OF THE WEEK:** If you have not already done so, file your **Item 21 attachments** for FY2008 **online** or by email, fax, or mail as soon as possible. Remember that if PIA asks you for your Item 21 attachments and you do not provide them within the required timeframe, you risk denial of your funding requests.

## Commitments for Funding Year 2007

**Funding Year 2007.** USAC will release FY2007 Wave 47 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) April 22. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance requests at 81% and above and denials at 80% and below. As of April 18, FY2007 commitments total just under $2.28 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.

## GAO Survey of E-rate Beneficiaries

You may be selected to participate in a survey that will be conducted shortly by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), an agency of the U.S. Congress, as part of a GAO review of the E-rate program. We urge you to participate.

GAO plans to survey approximately 700 randomly selected beneficiaries to obtain information on their experiences with and views of the E-rate program. Because beneficiaries will be randomly selected, survey responses will be representative of the entire E-rate beneficiary population. Those beneficiaries chosen to participate will receive an e-mail from GAO later this month with instructions on how to access and complete the survey.

GAO will discuss the results of the survey in a report to Congress to be issued later this year. We encourage you to participate in the survey, if requested, so GAO will be able to provide Congress with the best possible information on how the E-rate program is working for beneficiaries and what improvements may be needed to help it work better.

Only GAO staff assigned to this study will be able to access and view your responses. GAO will report the results of the survey in summary form, and if they discuss any individual answers in their report, they will exclude any information that could be used to tie individual beneficiaries to their responses.

## Service Provider Training Registration

Service providers can still register for the service provider training sessions to be held May 8 in Miami and May 14 in Salt Lake City. We have started a waiting list for Miami and will contact potential registrants as we receive cancellations; Salt Lake City still has openings. You can find detailed information on both sessions – including hotel rates and locations – on the 2008 Service Provider Training Information page.

**NOTE:** We have revised the Salt Lake City agenda to include an information session on the Rural Health Care (RHC) Pilot Program. You can now attend either Miami or Salt Lake City to get information on this program.

To cancel or change a registration or for more information about the training, email USAC Training or call 1-877-883-1786 ext. 408.

## Using the Form 471 Application Status Tool

If you want to know the status of your FY2008 Form 471, you can look it up using the Form 471 Application Status Tool. This tool provides real-time information on the status of Forms 471 filed for a specific Billed Entity and funding year.

To use this tool, you must enter a Billed Entity Number (BEN), choose a funding year, and click "Search." The first screen you see gives you some general information about the results of your search. If you click "Continue" at the bottom of the page, you will then see the following information for every Form 471 filed for the BEN and funding year you entered:

- Form 471 Application Number (assigned by USAC)
- Applicant Form Identifier (created by the Billed Entity)
- Application Status

Below the list of search results is an Application Status Explanation table that provides information on each of the statuses that can be assigned to a Form 471.

In general, in-window Forms 471 begin with the status **Certified - In Window**. For FY2008, this includes:

- Paper Forms 471 that were received by USAC or postmarked on or before the close of the filing window (February 7, 2008) and
- Forms 471 filed online on or before the close of the filing window and certified online or on paper on or before the extended deadline for certifications (March 13, 2008).

These forms remain in that status until they are assigned to an initial reviewer to begin the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review process. Once the Form 471 has been assigned to an initial reviewer, the status changes to **Initial Review**.

Your initial reviewer may have questions about your application or may be unable to locate your Item 21 Attachment. If so, he or she will attempt to contact you. Initial reviewers start with the preferred mode of contact you indicated in Item 6 of the Form 471 to contact you with written questions and/or requests for information. (If your preferred mode of contact is telephone, the initial reviewer will call you and ask you for a fax number or email address in order to send you written questions.)

After Initial Review is complete and the initial reviewer has made a funding decision, the status of the application changes to **Available for Final Review**. As above, once the application has been assigned to a final reviewer, the status changes to **Final Review**.

The final reviewer reviews the work of the initial reviewer. If the final reviewer discovers a problem – such as a procedure that was not correctly followed – the application is returned to the initial reviewer for additional work. If this happens, the status will change back to **Initial Review** and the initial reviewer may contact you again for more information.

After the final reviewer is satisfied that all procedures have been properly followed and the decision of the initial reviewer is correct, the application may be subject to additional quality checks (**Quality Assurance 1** or **Quality Assurance 2**). As above, if a problem is identified, the application will return to **Initial Review** status for resolution.

Once the review process is complete, USAC can make decisions on funding requests. After USAC issues an FCDL, the status of the Form 471 changes to **FCDL Issued - 'xx/xx/xxxx'** where the x's are replaced by the date the FCDL was issued. Note that if some individual funding requests on the application are in an "As Yet Unfunded" or "Under Review" status, one or more subsequent FCDLs may be issued until USAC has communicated a funding decision on all the funding requests on the application. If USAC issues more than one FCDL, the date on the Form 471 status will be the date of the latest FCDL.

Some applications may be held or deferred. The following statuses indicate that review of an application has been temporarily suspended:

- **\*Unable to Contact (**formerly **Held for Contact Person):** USAC has attempted to reach the contact person using the information available on the form and in our database and has been unable to do so. If your application is in this status, you should contact your initial reviewer. If you don't know who your initial reviewer is or are unable to locate his or her contact information, call the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 1-888-203-8100.
- **\*Deferred:** USAC has been unsuccessful in contacting you during the summer or winter periods when extended holiday and break schedules occur or – during one of those periods – you asked us to defer our review. (For more information on these summer and winter periods, successful contacts, and response deadlines, refer to the Reference Area

document [Deadline for Information Requests](#).) If you feel you should not be in this status, contact your initial reviewer or CSB as described above.

- **\*Awaiting Applicant Documentation:** USAC has requested information or documentation from you but does not yet have your response. Contact your initial reviewer if you have any questions.
- **Held for further review and other verification:** USAC needs to collect additional information and/or verify information already provided before a funding decision can be made. In some cases this can happen quickly; in others, the additional work will take some time.

Note that USAC will not review applications that have the following statuses:

- **Canceled:** In general, a form in Canceled status was canceled in consultation with the Billed Entity.
- **Incomplete:** A form in Incomplete status is either a paper form for which data entry has not been completed or an online form for which the "Submit" button has not yet been pushed. If this form does not eventually move into the status of Certified - In Window, USAC will not review it.
- **Certified - Out of Window:** A form in Certified - Out of Window status was certified after the extended certification deadline. It will only be considered for funding after all Certified - In Window forms have been considered.  Except for Funding Year 1999, funding has been insufficient to consider funding requests on out-of-window forms.

\*Updated entries for the three statuses that appear above with an asterisk (\*) will be included in the Application Status Explanation table shortly.

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