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Schools and Libraries News Brief

May 9, 2008

TIP OF THE WEEK: Check to make sure you have filed your Item 21 Attachments for FY2008. 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.

National Teacher Day

In honor of National Teacher Day (May 6) this past week, USAC would like to thank teachers for their dedication and efforts in teaching tomorrow's leaders. USAC would like to recognize especially those teachers who embrace and incorporate new technologies into their curricula made available by such programs as the Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund. Using Internet access and telecommunications technologies enriches our children's learning experiences and prepares them for the future as active, involved leaders of our communities. Thank you for all you do for our children, our communities, and the world.

Commitments for Funding Years 2008 and 2007

Funding Year 2008. USAC will release FY2008 Wave 3 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) May 14. This wave will include commitments for approved Priority 1 requests (Telecommunications Services and Internet Access) for schools and libraries at all discount levels. As of May 9, FY2008 commitments total just over \$381 million.

Funding Year 2007. USAC will release FY2007 Wave 50 FCDLs May 14. 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 May 9, FY2007 commitments total just over \$2.31 billion.

On the day the FCDLs are mailed, you can check to see if you have a commitment by using USAC's [Automated Search of Commitments](#) tool.

Out-of-Window Letters Mailed May 7

On May 7, USAC issued about 450 letters to every applicant that filed a Form 471 outside of the filing window. If your Form 471 is postmarked or submitted online after the close of the window, or if the certification for your online form is late, USAC issues an out-of-window letter.

Note, however, that USAC does not issue an out-of-window letter for a Form 471 that has an Incomplete status. You can check the status of a Form 471 by using the [Form 471 Application Status tool](#) on the USAC website.

Filing Form 486 Early

Now that USAC has started issuing funding commitments for FY2008, applicants can check to see if they are eligible to file Form 486 early. Form 486 notifies USAC that invoices can be paid, provides the name(s) of the USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver(s) that approved the appropriate technology plans, and certifies the status under the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

Form 486 can be filed early – that is, before the start of services – under the following conditions:

- USAC has issued a positive commitment for a Funding Request Number (FRN) on an FCDL
- The applicant has confirmed with the service provider featured on the FRN that services will start in July (the first month of the funding year)
- The applicant can accurately make all of the certifications on Block 4 of the form and
- The Form 486 is filed online or postmarked on or before July 31.

Filing a Form 486 early allows the service provider to provide – and the applicant to receive – services promptly at the start of the funding year. For services that are continuing from the previous funding year, this early filing also helps prevent discounted services from being interrupted.

For more information, refer to the [Form 486 Instructions](#).

Volunteering for a HATS Visit

In September 2006, USAC's [site visit program](#) added a new component called HATS (Helping Applicants to Succeed). The purpose of HATS is to assist applicants who have experienced difficulties with the Schools and Libraries Program over the last few years.

For a HATS visit, no advance preparation is required. We will not ask to see any of your forms, program documentation, or equipment. We will walk you through the 11-step application process detailed on the USAC website. Depending on your knowledge of the Program, we will spend more time reviewing the steps that may have been difficult for you in past applications.

During a HATS visit, you can ask questions, make observations, and provide suggestions. If you would like to share a difficult issue that you have encountered in the past, we can talk you through the issue so you are better equipped to handle it in the future. The feedback we gather will also help us provide targeted training to improve the Program and help you and other applicants become more successful in the future.

The HATS visit process will also include a "walk-through" of the USAC website, including the [Tip Sheets](#) that include useful Program information and best practices.

USAC selects a certain number of applicants for a HATS visit each year. You can also call the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 1-888-203-8100 and request to be considered for a HATS visit. CSB will ask you for the following information and then forward your responses to USAC for consideration:

- Contact person name
- Contact person phone number
- Contact person email address
- Contact who completes the application paperwork (if different from contact above)
- Billed Entity Name (or names if you apply for more than one Billed Entity)
- Billed Entity Number (or numbers if you apply for more than one Billed Entity)
- Reason(s) for the HATS visit request, such as: prior denials, reductions in funding, a Commitment Adjustment (COMAD), a Recovery of Improperly Disbursed Funds (RIDF) or a successful or unsuccessful appeal.

If you are selected for a HATS visit, someone from USAC will contact you to arrange the details of the visit.

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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