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Schools and Libraries News Brief

June 20, 2008

TIP OF THE WEEK: Applicants with funding commitments for FY2008 services starting in July are encouraged to file Form 486 if they are eligible to do so. Filing Form 486 now will give your service provider(s) notice that discounts can appear on bills in July and that USAC can process invoices for those services.

Commitments for Funding Years 2008 and 2007

Funding Year 2008. USAC will release FY2008 Wave 9 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) June 24. 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 June 20, FY2008 commitments total just under \$614 million.

Funding Year 2007. USAC will release FY2007 Wave 56 FCDLs June 25. 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 June 20, FY2007 commitments total over \$2.38 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.

What Should I Be Doing This Summer?

Even though schools are closed for the summer, both applicants and service providers can, with a few simple steps, make sure applications continue to be reviewed, invoices continue to be paid, and documents continue to be processed. Here are a few tips for how you can help speed these forms and requests along:

APPLICANTS

1. Submit your Item 21 attachments if you have not already done so.

The Form 471 Item 21 attachment provides a detailed description of the products and services in a funding request. Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review of an application cannot begin until PIA has Item 21 attachments for all of the funding requests in an application.

If you have not already filed your Item 21 attachments, you can:

- [File them online](#) with your Form 471 application number and security code. Be sure to push the "Submit" button at the end of the last page of each attachment so that it is available for review.
- File them by email, electronically, or on paper. You can find the instructions for each filing method in the [Item 21 Attachments guidance](#) on the website.
- Submit them directly to your PIA reviewer. Contact information for your reviewer is on the written list of PIA questions that are either faxed or emailed to you once the review of your application has begun.

2. Verify your contact information and update it if necessary.

Applicants and service providers provide contact information on each program form and also on each program request, e.g., for a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) change, service substitution, or invoice deadline extension. USAC uses this information to contact the applicant or service provider if any questions arise during processing and review.

If your contact information is incorrect or outdated, USAC's attempts to contact you may be unsuccessful. This may result in USAC putting your form or request on hold or processing it with the information at hand, which may lead to a denial or a rejection.

You can update your contact information or provide alternative information for USAC to contact you during the summer by following the instructions in the [Contact Information Changes guidance](#) on the website.

3. Respond to any PIA and Selective Review questions.

PIA continues to review applications during the summer. If you do not respond by the deadline on the PIA request, PIA will review your application with the information you provided, which may lead to a reduction or denial of funding.

The contact procedures for the summer period – which are defined in the [Deadline for Information Requests](#) guidance document – are now in effect. In short, this means that if PIA's first attempt to contact you was on or after May 23 and that contact was unsuccessful, PIA will put your application on hold and attempt to contact you again on or after September 5. However, if you do not want your application placed on hold, you can respond to the PIA request or contact your reviewer and keep the review process moving.

4. Respond to any Problem Resolution (paper form processing) questions.

USAC continues to process paper forms during the summer as well. If USAC cannot data enter your paper form, someone from Problem Resolution will contact you to obtain the information we need to complete the processing of your form.

As above, if Problem Resolution cannot make a successful contact with you, we will put the processing of your paper form on hold until after September 5. If you would like information on the processing of a paper form, use [Submit a Question](#) or call the Client Service Bureau at 1-888-203-8100.

5. Submit your BEAR Forms for services already received.

Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Forms 472 do not have to be submitted at regular intervals. For example, if you usually submit one BEAR Form for your Telecommunications Services at the end of the year but you have already paid 11 of the 12 monthly bills from your service provider, you can submit a BEAR Form now for 11 months of service and then submit a final BEAR Form for the remaining month after you receive and pay that final bill.

If you submit a BEAR Form now, make sure someone is in the office to deposit the reimbursement check from your service provider or ask your service provider to give you a credit on your bill.

6. Label and store program-related documents.

FCC rules require you to retain documentation related to the application process and the receipt and delivery of discounted services for five years after the last date to receive service. The best time to file and store those documents is when they are final and you have finished using them.

For example, gather together copies of your Requests for Proposals (RFP), winning and losing bids, bid evaluation matrices, and any other documentation related to the competitive bidding process immediately after you select the most cost-effective bid and choose your service provider. If those documents are still lying around loose, now would be a good time to collect, organize, and file them.

7. Make sure the technology plan that covers FY2008 services has been approved.

FCC rules require that services other than [basic telephone service](#) be covered by an approved technology plan. Because July 1, 2008 is the first day applicants can receive discounted services for FY2008, technology plans that cover services for FY2008 should have already been approved by a [USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver \(TPA\)](#).

If your current technology plan expires before July 1, 2008 and you don't know if your new plan has been approved, check with your TPA.

- If your plan has been approved, be sure to keep a copy of the technology plan approval letter or other evidence – such as a printout of a TPA webpage listing approved plans – that demonstrates the approval.
- If your plan has not been approved, move quickly to get it approved before services start for FY2008.

8. Subscribe to the Schools and Libraries News Brief from a personal account.

USAC will continue to issue News Briefs each Friday this summer. Along with general program guidance, the News Briefs will include updates that may request or require action before September. For example, the FCC generally issues the Draft Eligible Services List for the upcoming funding year during the month of July, with comments and reply comments due before the end of August.

You are welcome to subscribe to the News Brief from more than one email account – even if you subscribe from the second account only during the summer months and then unsubscribe when you return in September – by clicking on the "subscribe" link at the bottom of this page. This way you can stay informed if you do not have access to your email account at work during the summer.

Next week we will cover summer activities for service providers.

Erratum

In December 2007, USAC provided training for TPAs on approving technology plans. Slide 4 of the posted presentation [Approving Technology Plans](#) indicated that a technology plan is not required for key system lines when in fact a technology plan **is** required for those lines. The slide has been corrected.

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