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Schools and Libraries News Brief

June 27, 2008

TIP OF THE WEEK: To find the status of a Form 471, choose a funding year and enter a Billed Entity Number (BEN) in the [Form 471 Application Status tool](#). Your search will display the statuses of all Forms 471 for that funding year and BEN together with a table that explains each status.

Commitments for Funding Years 2008 and 2007

Funding Year 2008. USAC will release FY2008 Wave 10 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) July 1. 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 27, FY2008 commitments total just under \$640 million.

Funding Year 2007. USAC will release FY2007 Wave 57 FCDLs July 2. 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 27, FY2007 commitments total just under \$2.42 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.

FCC Directs USAC to Carry Forward \$600 Million to FY2008

The FCC has announced that \$600 million in unused Schools and Libraries funds from FY2002, FY2003, and FY2004 will be carried forward to FY2008. As a result, USAC will be able to make funding commitments for schools and libraries for FY2008 in excess of the annual \$2.25 billion cap.

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 filed. Here are a few reminders of the processes that keep going during the summer months and what you can do to help:

SERVICE PROVIDERS

1. Revise your Form 498 if necessary.

Many service providers filed a [Form 498, Service Provider Identification Number and Contact Information Form](#) early on to obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) and have not revised the form since that first filing. However, keeping the Form 498 information on that form updated is important because USAC uses it to contact service providers by email, to prepare payment information, and for other communications. Applicants also rely on the service provider information in USAC's [SPIN Contact Search tool](#) which pulls directly from the most recent Form 498 or revision.

Service providers that participate in the Schools and Libraries Program should maintain current contact information for the general contact (Block 2), Schools and Libraries contact (Block 11), and company officer on the Form 498 (Block 14). If you have not designated a Schools and Libraries contact – or if any information on your form needs to be updated – you can easily file a revision to your Form 498.

- If you filed Form 498 on or before October 2005 and have not filed a revision, you will have to file your revision on paper.
- If you filed Form 498 after October 2005, you can access [USAC's E-File System](#) and use the login information USAC created for you in order to file your revision online.

- If you have any questions about filing a Form 498 revision online or on paper, call USAC's Customer Resource Management Center at 1-888-641-8722 and choose option 3, Support for FCC Form 498.

2. Monitor the progress of any paper forms you submit to USAC.

USAC continues to process paper forms during the summer. For service providers, this includes the [Form 473, Service Provider Annual Certification \(SPAC\) Form](#) and the [Form 474, Service Provider Invoice \(SPI\) Form](#). In fact, if you have not already filed Form 473 for FY2008, now is a good time to do so. Be sure to use the April 2007 version of the form. Remember that USAC will not pay invoices for FY2008 unless the service provider has successfully filed a Form 473 for FY2008.

If USAC cannot data enter your paper form because of inconsistent or missing information, someone from Problem Resolution will contact you to obtain the information we need to complete the processing of your form.

Contact procedures for the summer period are now in effect. This means that if Problem Resolution attempts to contact you on or after May 23 and that contact is unsuccessful, your paper form will be put on hold and we will not attempt to contact you again until after September 5. Although these procedures were established to avoid penalizing school applicants when schools are in recess, they apply to other applicants and also to service providers.

If you were on vacation or otherwise unavailable on or after May 23 and you believe we have put your paper form on hold, you can respond to our original request or you can call the Client Service Bureau at 1-888-203-8100 and ask us to locate and process your paper form.

Remember that you can also file Form 474 online and obviate the need for USAC to process a paper form.

3. Assist applicants with responses to PIA review questions if requested.

Applicants may need your help responding to technical or contractual questions from Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) and USAC encourages service providers to provide that help. Often a network diagram or other technical information will clarify a situation and allow the PIA reviewer to make an appropriate determination based on that information and proceed with the application review process.

- If you are on a conference call with the applicant and a PIA reviewer, it would help the applicant if you can summarize the information you provide in an email or other written format for the applicant's records. You could also remind the applicant that taking notes is a good idea.
- If you contact a PIA reviewer without the applicant present, send the applicant a summary of the information you provided.
- If you send any documentation to a PIA reviewer, copy the applicant on your response.

4. Log in to the E-File System once a week to check for BEAR Forms.

Applicants continue to file [Form 472, Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement \(BEAR\) Form](#) online and on paper during the summer. If a BEAR Form is filed online, the service provider identified on the form must approve the form online before USAC can process it.

Although USAC sends an email to the service provider immediately after an applicant certifies a BEAR Form online, it is not necessary to wait for the email before taking action. If you log in to the E-File System once a week and review any BEAR Forms awaiting approval, you will not miss any that might otherwise age out of the system and have to be resubmitted.

Remember that simply clicking on the button at the bottom of an online BEAR Form actually rejects the form in its entirety. To approve all or part of a BEAR Form, you must first affirmatively check the box at the end of each line that you approve or check the box that approves all lines. If you "approve" the form with no lines checked, the applicant will be required to resubmit the form.

5. Review FY2009 Forms 470 filed by applicants.

On April 12, 2008, applicants could begin posting Forms 470 for FY2009 to the USAC website. Most applicants wait until the fall preceding the start of the funding year to post Forms 470.

However, applicants with long procurement cycles, state replacement contracts, or other situations may already be posting Forms 470.

If you are interested in reviewing these forms, you can use the Form 470 Search Posted tool to display individual forms or the Form 470 Download tool to download a comma-delimited file containing certain blocks or all blocks of data on these forms. You can find both of these tools on the [Search Tools page](#) on the USAC website.

- If you try to access either tool and you get a timeout message, click the link a second time and you should then be able to access the tool.
- If you use the Form 470 Download tool to create and download a file, you can then open the file in a spreadsheet program and sort the data yourself.

6. Label and file program-related documents.

FCC rules require both applicants and service providers to retain documentation related to the application for, 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.

Most of the documentation needed by auditors and for other program reasons is maintained by applicants. However, service providers have copies of contracts, evidence of payment of customer bills, SPI Forms, and other useful program information. Remember that you can store information electronically – for example, by scanning paper documents and archiving the scanned files.

If you store files electronically, keep in mind that naming conventions should allow you to easily identify and retrieve documents that relate to a particular customer or application.

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