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Schools and Libraries News Brief

August 22, 2008

> **TIP OF THE WEEK:** Remember that you do not have to wait for the FY2009 window to open in order to file a Form 470 for FY2009. If you have all the necessary information, you can go to the Apply Online page and use either the Form 470 Interview or the Form 470 standard version to file a Form 470. You can also complete and mail a paper Form 470 to USAC.

Commitments for Funding Years 2008 and 2007

Funding Year 2008. USAC will release FY2008 Wave 20 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) August 26. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance requests at 90% and denials at 79% and below. As of August 22, FY2008 commitments total over $1.11 billion.

Funding Year 2007. USAC will release FY2007 Wave 61 FCDLs August 27. 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 August 22, FY2007 commitments total over $2.45 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.

NPRM Published in Federal Register

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) (FCC 08–173) mentioned in the August 1, 2008 SL News Brief has now been published in the Federal Register. In this NPRM the Federal Communications Commission seeks comment on whether certain services should be designated as eligible for funding under the E-rate program.

The NPRM can be found on pages 48352–48359 of the Federal Register, Vol. 73, No. 161 for Tuesday, August 19, 2008.

Comments on the NPRM are due on or before September 18, 2008. Reply comments are due on or before October 3, 2008. For information on filing comments, please refer to the ADDRESSES section that starts on page 48352 of the Federal Register notice.

Fall Training Update

This fall, USAC will offer seven training sessions at locations around the country. You can register for a session and get hotel reservation information from the Training Information page on the USAC website.

Four of the training sessions have reached capacity and USAC is maintaining waiting lists for those sessions. If your plans change and you are unable to attend a session, please be sure to cancel your training registration so that someone from the waiting list can attend.

The hotel cutoff dates are listed below. These are important because the hotels are not obligated to offer the negotiated conference room rate after the cutoff date. We suggest that you make your hotel reservations as soon as possible.

The information below was current as of August 21 at 3:00 p.m. EDT:

City	Dates	Registrants	Cutoff Date
Washington, DC	September 11-12	- FULL -	Closed*

Seattle, WA	September 16-17	190	August 25
Denver, CO	September 23-24	235	August 30
Chicago, IL	October 2-3	- FULL -	September 12
Newark, NJ	October 6-7	235	September 12
Los Angeles, CA	October 15-16	- FULL -	September 16
Atlanta, GA	October 21-22	- FULL -	September 19

*Rooms are still available but not at the negotiated rate.

If you have questions, email USAC Training or call 1-877-883-1786 ext. 408.

Online BEAR Form Filing Tips

The deadline for filing an invoice for FY2007 recurring services is October 28, 2008. As a reminder – especially for those applicants that are just returning to school after summer vacation – we are including some filing tips for Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Forms 472.

Collect your documentation

- Review the BEAR Forms you have already filed for the funding year. If you filed them online, have they been approved by the service provider? Have they been paid by USAC? Has your service provider reimbursed you? If the answer to any of these questions is "no," you have follow-up work to do.
- Review the bills from your service provider(s). Have you received correct bills for all of the eligible services you received during the funding year? Have you paid those bills? Remember that you cannot invoice USAC using a BEAR Form until after you have paid for the services in full.
- **Service providers:** When a BEAR Form is submitted to you for approval, you will need your documentation of bills you sent to your customer, payments you received from your customer, and the services you provided in order to complete any review work you feel is necessary before you approve the BEAR Form. Remember that if the BEAR Form was filed online, you have the ability to approve or disapprove individual line items.

If you can, file or approve BEAR Forms online.

- If you have a Personal Identification Number (PIN), you can file and certify your BEAR Form online. Filing online reduces errors because (1) some information is populated automatically, and (2) USAC provides warning messages when other information is missing or inconsistent.
- Make sure your service provider knows how to review and approve BEAR Forms online. If your service provider does not know about the online access USAC provides to service providers, give your service provider the information below.
- **Service providers:** If you do not know how to use your User ID and password to log in to the E-file System, call the USAC Customer Resource Management Center at 1-888-641-8722 (choose the "Form 498" option from the phone menu, which is currently option 3) for assistance. Note that you may be required to complete a revision to your Form 498 on paper before USAC can issue you a User ID and password. One of your options under the E-file System is to review and approve online BEAR Forms that feature your Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN).

Verify that your service provider has submitted a SPAC Form for the funding year.

USAC will not process invoices for a funding year before the service provider has successfully submitted a Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form 473 for that funding year. You

can find out if USAC has a SPAC on file by using the [SPIN Contact Search tool](). After you enter your search criterion (SPIN or service provider name) and click the "Next" button, you can look in the far right-hand column to get this information.

Check your BEAR Form for errors before you submit it.

Here are some "Don'ts" to keep in mind:

- DON'T file a BEAR Form before USAC has issued a Form 486 Notification Letter or before the service provider has filed a SPAC Form. Wait for the Form 486 Notification Letter and check for the SPAC Form as indicated above.
- DON'T report both a Customer Billed Date (Column 12) and a Shipping Date (Column 13) on the same line. In general, report a Customer Billed Date for a recurring service and a Shipping Date for a non-recurring service.
- DON'T repeat the service start date for the Funding Request Number (FRN) as the Customer Billed Date on every line. For example, if you report 12 lines of monthly service for the same FRN, same amount, and same date, the system will assume 11 of those lines are duplicates. Instead, the first line should show a date of 07/2007, the second line should show 08/2007, the third line should show 09/2007, and so on.
- DON'T enter an FRN that doesn't appear on the cited Form 471. If you are filing online, you won't encounter this problem because you will receive an error message if the Form 471 application number and the FRN don't match. On a paper form, such a mismatch may delay processing or result in a zero payment.
- DON'T enter the wrong discount. If you file online, the system will automatically populate the approved discount for the FRN. If you file on paper and the discount you enter is lower than the approved discount, USAC will not correct your mistake but will process your payment at the lower discount level.

Make sure your service provider approves your BEAR Form.

- You can access the history of the BEAR Forms you have submitted using the same system you use to file BEAR Forms online. The status of a BEAR Form will be "PENDING VALIDATION" if the service provider has not yet signed off on the form.
- If you are filing on paper, be sure to use the current version of the form, dated April 2007 in the lower right-hand corner. You must submit all four pages on the current version, including page 4 signed and dated by the service provider.
- USAC does not consider the BEAR Form to be submitted until the entire form – including the approval by the service provider – has been submitted.

Submit your BEAR Form in plenty of time for your service provider to review it.

Ask your service provider how long it will take to approve a BEAR Form. Then make sure you file online or send your service provider a paper copy in plenty of time to get the service provider's approval. If the service provider's approval comes after the invoicing deadline, you will have to submit an [invoice deadline extension request]() and, after your request is approved, resubmit the invoice.

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