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## Schools and Libraries News Brief

September 12, 2008

**TIP OF THE WEEK: If you have a current approved technology plan, verify the date that your plan expires.** If it expires on or before June 30, 2009, you should already be working on the written technology plan that will form the basis for your FY2009 Form 470.

### Commitments for Funding Years 2008 and 2007

**Funding Year 2008.** USAC will release FY2008 Wave 23 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) September 16. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance requests at 90% and denials at 79% and below. As of September 12, FY2008 commitments total over \$1.19 billion.

**Funding Year 2007.** USAC will release FY2007 Wave 64 FCDLs September 15. 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 September 12, FY2007 commitments total over \$2.46 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.

### Fall Training Update

The training session in Newark on October 6-7 still has space available; registrations for the other six sessions have closed, although we continue to admit registrants from the waiting lists as we receive cancellations.

The conference hotels have expressed a willingness to work with individuals trying to reserve rooms even if hotel cutoff dates have passed. If you have difficulty making a reservation, [email USAC Training](#) or call 1-877-883-1786 ext. 408.

For information on the training sessions or to download or print the agenda and training materials, go to the [Training Information page](#) on the USAC website.

### SERVICE PROVIDERS: Get Ready for FY2009

Although we are a few months away from the FY2009 application filing window, applicants and service providers should be working on any remaining issues from previous funding years and preparing for the next application cycle. Following are some tips for service providers (see last week's News Brief for applicant tips).

#### File Forms 473 for FY2007 and FY2008 if you have not already done so.

[Form 473, Service Provider Annual Certification \(SPAC\) Form](#), must be filed each funding year before invoices for that funding year can be paid.

If you have not yet filed this form for one or more funding years, you should do so as soon as possible. One copy of the form must be filed for each Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN). If you have filed the form but you are not sure if USAC has successfully processed it, enter your SPIN in the [SPIN Contact Search tool](#) and review the list of funding years in the far right-hand column.

SPAC Forms must be filed on paper using the revised version of the form dated April 2007.

#### Verify that USAC has your current contact information on Form 498.

Service providers file [Form 498, Service Provider Identification Number \(SPIN\) and Contact Information Form](#), to get a SPIN and to provide USAC with correct contact and remittance

information. The original form must be filed on paper but Form 498 can be easily updated through the [E-file System](#).

It is important to keep the information on this form current.

- To review the contact information on your Form 498 that is available to applicants, go to the [SPIN Contact Search tool](#).
- To review other information on the Form 498, you will have to log in to the [E-file System](#) with your E-cert ID and password. If you need help, call the USAC Billing, Collections, and Disbursements Department at 1-888-641-8722 (choose the "Form 498" option, which is currently option 3, rather than the "Schools and Libraries" option) for assistance.

Note that in some cases you may have to file a revision to your Form 498 on paper before USAC can issue an E-cert ID and password. Once you are able to log in to the E-file System, you can update your information online.

#### **Finish filing SPI Forms for FY2007 recurring services.**

The invoicing deadline for FY2007 recurring services is October 28, 2008 – less than two months from now. We generally receive a large number of both Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Forms 472 and Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Forms 474 close to the invoicing deadline, which results in longer processing times and may necessitate filing an invoice deadline extension request if an invoice is rejected.

All service providers can [file SPI Forms online](#). Service providers that invoice USAC frequently and would like to file invoices electronically can follow the [instructions for setting up e-invoicing](#). Service providers that file SPI Forms on paper must use the April 2007 version of the form.

#### **Finish approving BEAR Forms for FY2007 recurring services.**

Whether applicants file BEAR Forms online or on paper, you must approve those forms before USAC can review them. Following are some tips to assist you in the approval process:

- **Tell your customers how long it will take you to review and approve BEAR Forms.** Applicants that file BEAR Forms often wait until close to the USAC invoicing deadline to file online or to send paper BEAR Forms to service providers for approval. If you clearly communicate to your customers how much lead time you need to review and approve the forms before the deadline, both you and your customers will have a much better chance of meeting the invoicing deadline and avoid having to request an invoice deadline extension.
- **Approve BEAR Forms online.** Service providers with an E-cert ID and a password [can approve BEAR Forms online](#). If you don't know your E-cert ID and password, call the USAC Billing, Collections, and Disbursements Department (see above) for assistance.
- **If you are approving BEAR Forms online, log in to the E-file System on the same day each week to see if any forms are awaiting your approval.** Although USAC sends an email to both the applicant and the service provider when a BEAR Form is filed online, these emails are not always received. However, service providers are not required to wait for an email to arrive before approving a BEAR Form. If you log in to the E-file System once a week, you will be able to review BEAR Forms in a timely manner.
- **If the applicant files on paper, check the date on your signature page.** If the applicant does not submit all four pages using **the April 2007 version** of the form, USAC will request a new submission, significantly delaying processing.
- **Use your current contact information and update where necessary.** If USAC has questions about your invoice, we will use the contact information on the invoice to get in touch with you. If we can't get answers to our questions, your invoice may be denied and you will have to resubmit.
- **Don't file duplicate invoices or line items.** First check your customer bills (the bills sent by the service provider to the applicant) and any previous invoices so that you invoice USAC only for amounts that have not yet been invoiced.

#### **Check the status of FY2007 non-recurring services.**

September 30 following the funding year is generally the deadline for delivery and installation of non-recurring services. While September 30, 2008 is the deadline for most FY2007 non-recurring services, it can also be the extended deadline for services from other funding years.

Again, here are some tips:

- **Ask your customer to request a service delivery extension by September 30 if one is needed.** Applicants can request an extension for the delivery and installation of non-recurring services. You and your customer should review the requirements for a [service delivery extension request](#) and, if you fit one or both criteria, your customer can submit a request to USAC. Note that these requests must be received by USAC or postmarked on or before the September 30 deadline. Requests received or postmarked after this deadline cannot be processed.
- **Check the expiration date on your contract and, if necessary, extend your contract and ask your customer to notify USAC of the new contract expiration date using a Form 500.** USAC will not pay for services delivered after the contract expiration date on file or after the original (or extended) service delivery deadline.
- **If September 30, 2008 is the last date to receive non-recurring services, then January 28, 2009 is the last day to invoice USAC for those services.** Don't wait until the last minute to gather customer bills and prepare SPI Forms or approve BEAR Forms.

#### **Verify that your customers have submitted Forms 486 for FY2008.**

If your FY2008 FCDL is dated on or before July 1, 2008, the deadline to file Form 486 is probably October 28, 2008, because about two-thirds of the Funding Request Numbers (FRNs) for a funding year feature July 1 as the service start date. Applicants that wait until the last minute to file Form 486 may cause delays in processing and review at USAC.

Applicants that wait until the last minute are also likely to get confused by USAC's Form 486 Reminder Letter. USAC now sends out reminder letters to applicants that miss the Form 486 deadline because they either:

- fail to file a Form 486 by the deadline, or
- file a Form 486 online and then fail to certify it by the deadline.

USAC uses the service start date reported in Item 19 of the Form 471 and the FCDL date to determine when a reminder letter should be sent. USAC tries to identify late filers as soon as possible after the calculated Form 486 filing deadline date so that Forms 486 can be filed or certified promptly. This means that applicants that wait until the last minute to file or certify a form will probably receive one of these letters and become concerned that USAC has not received their form or their certification.

Because USAC will not pay invoices until a Form 486 is on file, it is important to check with your customers to make sure that they have filed the form. Once USAC has reviewed and approved the form, USAC will issue a [Form 486 Notification Letter to you](#) and the applicant.

Once you have covered or resolved any remaining issues from previous funding years, it will be time to start thinking about FY2009. Future News Briefs will cover the application process from start to finish.

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