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Schools and Libraries News Brief

December 4, 2009

TIP OF THE WEEK: The FY2010 Form 471 application filing window opened yesterday, December 3, and will close on Thursday, February 11, 2010. For more information on the filing window, refer to the [December 3 Special Edition SL News Brief](#).

Commitments for Funding Years 2009 and 2008

Funding Year 2009. USAC released FY2009 Wave 30 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) December 2 and will release Wave 31 FCDLs December 8. These waves include commitments for approved Priority 2 requests (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections) at 80% and above and denials at 54% and below. As of December 4, FY2009 commitments total just under \$1.6 billion.

Funding Year 2008. USAC released FY2008 Wave 74 FCDLs December 3. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 2 requests at 87% and above and denials at 86% and below. As of December 4, FY2008 commitments total just under \$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.

First Applicants File FY2010 Forms 471

Congratulations to the first applicants that filed and certified Forms 471 for FY2010 online! Applicants that file early have a much better chance of being included in the earliest funding waves for a funding year.

The first successful online filers were:

- **First individual school:** Bais Yaakov of Boston HS-Girls, Newton Center, Massachusetts
- **First school district:** Mendon-Upton Reg Sch District, Mendon, Massachusetts
- **First library:** Vicksburg District Library, Vicksburg, Michigan

First FY2009 Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letters Mailed

Yesterday USAC mailed just over 2,000 Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letters for FY2009. These letters notify applicants whose Forms 486 may be late. USAC calculates the date to issue these letters based on:

- the date of your Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) and
- the service start date you reported on your Form 471.

Note that if you have already filed a Form 486 online but have not yet certified that form online or on paper, USAC will issue you a Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letter to remind you to certify your form.

Your Form 486 is late for any FY2009 FRN that meets the following conditions:

- USAC issued you an FCDL featuring a positive commitment on that FRN on or before July 1, 2009 and
- The service start date you will report on a Form 486 for that FRN is July 1, 2009.

To avoid an adjustment to your service start date and possible reduction in funding, you must certify a Form 486 featuring that FRN by Wednesday, December 23.

USAC will continue to issue a Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letter for each FRN that appears to have missed its Form 486 deadline, based on your FCDL date and the service start date you reported on the Form 471.

USAC to Begin Issuing BEAR Payments Electronically

The FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau announced September 28 that all federal Universal Service Fund (USF) support payments must be made by electronic funds transfer. (See [Public Notice DA 09-2126](#).) Currently, USAC still issues Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) payments by check.

By this year's end, USAC expects to begin issuing BEAR payments electronically where there is banking information provided in Block 11 (Schools and Libraries Remittance Information) on the Service Provider's FCC Form 498. More details will be provided once USAC determines the specific date that electronic BEAR payments will begin.

For now, USAC continues to issue checks for both SPI and BEAR payments to companies who have not provided banking information. However, USAC reminds all service providers that the FCC's Public Notice indicates that, at some future date, payments will be held in the absence of banking information. Again, USAC will provide more details once the FCC sets that specific date.

All newly filed Forms 498 now require the provision of banking information. USAC encourages all service providers to update their Form 498 information using [USAC's E-File System](#).

Entity Numbers, Part 1

What is an entity number?

An entity number is a unique identifying number assigned by USAC to each entity that (1) is eligible to receive discounts under the E-rate program and/or (2) files program forms.

An eligible entity can be an individual school, a library outlet/branch, a school district, a library system, or a Non-Instructional Facility (NIF) such as an administrative office. Entity numbers for eligible entities can appear in Block 1 of a program form and/or in a Form 471 Block 4 worksheet that lists the recipients of service for a funding request.

Here are some examples of entities that have entity numbers but that are not eligible for (or do not request) discounted services:

- A state procurement agency that files a Form 470 to open a competitive bidding process. The agency enters its entity number in Form 470, Item 3.
- A city or town that controls the budget of a library and pays the bills for the library. The city or town enters its entity number in Block 1 of all appropriate program forms and in Form 470, Item 17.
- A consortium leader that is not itself eligible for discounts but applies on behalf of its consortium members. The consortium leader enters its entity number in Block 1 of all appropriate program forms and in Form 470, Item 17.
- A school district, if the district is not applying for funding itself but an applicant is completing one or more Form 471 Block 4 worksheets for the district's individual schools. The applicant enters the school district entity number in Item 9a of the appropriate worksheet(s).
- A library system, if the system is not applying for funding itself but an applicant is completing one or more Form 471 Block 4 worksheets for the system's outlets/branches. The applicant enters the library system entity number in Item 9a of the appropriate worksheet(s).

What is a Billed Entity Number?

If an entity pays a service provider for products and/or services delivered to eligible schools and/or libraries, that entity is called a billed entity. USAC assigns that entity a Billed Entity Number or BEN. There is no visible difference between a number assigned as a BEN and a number assigned as an entity number. (An eligible entity that pays the bills and also requests discounts does not need two numbers.)

A billed entity is not required to be – but may be – an eligible entity. For example, an ineligible entity such as town or city government may be assigned a BEN if it pays the bills to service providers for eligible services on behalf of eligible entities.

How do I locate an entity number?

To locate an entity number, go to the [Billed Entity Number Search tool](#). You can limit your search by entity type (school district, school, library, or all types), and search by **one** of the following:

- Full or partial name (remember to add a "%" sign after a partial name)
- Zip code
- State/territory
- Entity number

For specific information about an entity, click on the Billed Entity Number in the search results.

How do I request an entity number?

To request an entity number, contact our Client Service Bureau (CSB) either through [Submit a Question](#) (choose "Entity Number" from the Topic Inquiry list and then "I need an entity number for a new entity") or by calling 1-888-203-8100.

CSB needs specific information to create a new entity. For assistance in preparing your request for an entity number or for more information about entity numbers, refer to the document [Step 1. Entity Numbers](#) posted on the USAC website.

If you are requesting three or more entity numbers, please use [Submit a Question](#) to submit your request. Be sure to include all of the information listed in [Step 1. Entity Numbers](#). You can also fax your request to CSB at 1-888-276-8736. Also, request entity numbers as soon as you know you will need them. Do not wait until the last few days of the window to submit your request.

What if my entity information is incorrect?

Contact CSB as described above to update any information that is incorrect or that has changed. Before you call, be sure you have the entity number of the entity you want to update and the corrected information handy.

In a future issue of the SL News Brief, we will provide additional guidance on specific issues around entity numbers.

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