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Schools and Libraries News Brief

January 2, 2009

FY2009 WINDOW COUNTDOWN

Days to window close **41**

Forms 470 filed to date **23,531**

Forms 471 filed to date **1,937**

Form 470 Deadline: January 15, 2009
Form 471 Deadline: February 12, 2009 at 11:59
p.m. EST

TIP OF THE WEEK: If you plan to file your Form 470 on paper, make sure USAC will RECEIVE it by January 8. We will make every effort to get your Form 470 posted by January 15 if we receive it by January 8, but we may not be able to post forms in time if they are received after that date.

Commitments for Funding Years 2008 and 2007

Funding Year 2008. USAC will release FY2008 Wave 33 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) January 5 and Wave 34 FCDLs January 6. Wave 34 FCDLs will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance requests at 88% and above and denials at 85% and below. As of January 2, FY2008 commitments total just under \$1.81 billion.

Funding Year 2007. USAC will not release a FY2007 wave this week. Please note that the wave issued December 16 was Wave 72, not Wave 71 as reported in the December 12 SL News Brief. As of January 2, FY2007 commitments total just under \$2.5 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.

More Tips for Online Filing

To assist applicants filing forms online, we are providing some additional tips to help the process go more smoothly.

1. Before you start

Gather the information you will need to complete your form. If you have all of the information you need at hand, you will not have to interrupt your work to look for numbers, service descriptions, contracts, or other documents that contain the information you need. For example, if you are filing a Form 470 online, you may need a copy of your Request for Proposals (RFP), a list of ineligible entities, a list of telephone area codes and prefixes if you are filing for multiple entities, and so on.

Verify your Billed Entity name and contact information. The easiest way to do this is to start an online Form 470, 471, or 486 from the [Apply Online page](#), enter your Billed Entity Number and click "Search," and then review the name, address, and telephone and fax numbers that populate the top of the form. (Note that the system does not save your work until you complete Block 1 and go on to the next screen.) If any of the information is not correct, call the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 1-888-203-8100 to correct it.

Get entity numbers for new entities. If a new entity has been created – or if you are applying this year for an entity that does not yet exist in the USAC database – you will need an entity number for that entity. You can contact CSB to provide the information necessary to create new entity numbers. If you need more than two entity numbers, use [Submit a Question](#) or the CSB fax number (1-888-276-8736) to submit your request. New entity numbers can be used online as soon as they are created.

Read the online help document. USAC has created a [Tips and Troubleshooting](#) document that covers the most common problems applicants have with filing forms online. The document includes tips on browsers and browser settings, cookies and firewalls, and troubleshooting activities that will solve most online problems. You can also contact CSB if you are having trouble.

Review the FY2009 Eligible Services List. Although the Eligible Services List (ESL) has not changed from FY2008, you should review the guidance provided in the list to be sure that the products and services you are requesting are eligible for discounts. In some cases, you will have to meet specific requirements or perform cost allocations as part of your application, and the ESL provides the necessary information.

Check the status of your technology plan. Your technology plan must be written before you file your Form 470, and your approved technology plan must cover the entire funding year. If your current technology plan expires before June 30, 2010, you should start working on the technology plan that, when approved, will cover your FY2009 services. Also, if you are writing a new plan and the approval process is lengthy or difficult, you should submit your plan for approval as soon as possible so that it can be reviewed and approved before services start for FY2009.

2. Before you file a Form 470

Review and comply with all applicable state and local requirements. For example, even though RFPs are not required under program rules, they may be required under your state and local procurement rules and regulations. Moreover, if you indicate on your Form 470 that you do not have and do not intend to have an RFP, and then you issue an RFP or similar document, you will have to file a new Form 470 and wait 28 days before you can close your competitive bidding process, choose a service provider, sign a contract, and sign and submit your Form 471.

Plan to post in all applicable categories of service. For example, if you are filing for cellular service that includes Internet access, post in both Telecommunications Services and Internet Access. If you are applying for on-premise Priority 1 equipment, post in both the applicable Priority 1 category (Telecommunications Services or Internet Access) and Internal Connections. If you must later split your service into two different categories – or if USAC must change the category of service for your funding request to comply with program rules – you will still have posted for the correct category of service.

Consider posting for multi-year contracts and contracts with voluntary extensions. If you check the boxes on your Form 470 (Item 7b) to indicate your interest in these options and you then sign one of these types of contracts, you can continue to cite this Form 470 for the life of the contract. However, if you do not check these boxes and then you sign one of these contracts, you will have to post a new Form 470 next year and consider any bids you receive. If you receive a bid that is more cost-effective than your current contract, you would have to go with that bid to continue to receive discounted services.

3. Before you file a Form 471

Verify your establishing Form 470 number(s). You must cite the Form 470 that formed the basis of the competitive bidding process that resulted in the services featured in each of your funding requests. You may need to do some research to locate this number if you signed a multi-year contract or a contract with voluntary extensions or if you are relying on a Form 470 posted by your state.

Review any contracts you have signed. Contracts contain important information which you will need to complete your Form 471, such as the contract number, service start date, contract expiration date, and a description of services. You should review your contracts carefully so that you know where to find any needed information.

Compile or locate your National School Lunch Program (NSLP) numbers. To properly complete your Block 4 worksheet(s), you will need information on the number of students in your school (or school district, if you are a library) and the number of students eligible for NSLP.

You may be able to obtain these numbers from a state website or other official source, or you may have used an [alternative discount mechanism](#). It is important to document your source and to maintain that documentation.

Double-check the status of any non-traditional students and facilities. The eligibility of students and facilities in Head Start, pre-kindergarten, adult education, and juvenile justice varies from state to state. You may need to perform a cost allocation if certain students or facilities are not eligible for discounts. Refer to the [Eligibility Table for Non-traditional K-12 Students and Facilities](#) for more information.

If your service providers don't already have Service Provider Identification Numbers (SPINs), encourage them to file Form 498 to obtain them. You can file a Form 471 and put a placeholder in Item 13 if your service provider doesn't yet have a SPIN. However, USAC will need a valid SPIN before invoices can be paid or, in some cases, before commitments can be made. Please note, however, that the placeholder or interim SPIN is generally available online only during the last week of the filing window.

4. During the online filing process

Remember to record your application number and security code. When you complete Block 1 of a form online, the system will assign you an application number and security code unique to that form. If for any reason you need to exit the form before you have completed it, you will need these numbers to return to and complete your form.

Respond to any error or warning messages. The online system is designed to help you complete your forms correctly. In general, if information you provide is incorrect or inconsistent with other information on the form, you will receive a popup or other warning message when you try to continue. In some cases you will have to change your entry; in other cases, the system will allow you to continue but you may still be required to provide the information during application review.

Over 95% of Forms 470 and 471 are filed online. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this option to reduce errors and to speed the processing of your forms. Remember that January 15 is the last day to POST a Form 470 to the USAC website and still file a Form 471 in time to meet both the 28-day waiting period and the window filing deadline.

You may download and print copies of [Schools and Libraries News Briefs](#) on USAC's website. You may [subscribe](#) to or [unsubscribe](#) from this news brief. For program information, please visit the [Schools and Libraries area](#) of the USAC website, [submit a question](#), or call us toll-free at 1-888-203-8100. Feel free to forward this news brief to any interested parties.

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