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Schools and Libraries News Brief

June 19, 2009

TIP OF THE WEEK: If you want to comment on the draft FY2010 Eligible Services List, keep the deadlines in mind. Comments are due on or before June 23 and reply comments are due on or before June 30. For information on filing comments with the FCC, refer to [Public Notice DA 09-1233](#).

Commitments for Funding Years 2009 and 2008

Funding Year 2009. USAC will release FY2009 Wave 9 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) June 23. 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 19, FY2009 commitments total just over \$416 million.

Funding Year 2008. USAC will release FY2008 Wave 57 FCDLs June 24. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance requests at 88% and above and denials at 86% and below. As of June 19, FY2008 commitments total over \$2.32 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 Application Training Registration Opens

USAC has posted information on the USAC website about the [applicant training sessions](#) that will be held this fall in cities around the country. In order to secure a space at one of the training sessions:

- Complete the online training registration form to register with USAC for a training session in a particular location.
- If you want to stay at the conference hotel, use the hotel information posted on the USAC website to reserve a room at the conference room rate. The hotel information page may also contain additional information including transportation options and the cutoff date for making hotel reservations.

Note that the dates for a few locations are not yet final; USAC registration and hotel information should be available shortly for those locations.

We suggest that you register with USAC for the location and date that best fits your schedule. Once the planned number of registrants is reached for a particular location, USAC will start a waiting list. From that point forward, USAC will release spaces only as cancellations are processed.

What Should I Be Doing This 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 processed during the summer months. Here are a few tips on how you can help speed these forms and requests along:

APPLICANTS

1. Submit your Item 21 attachments if you have not already done so.

The Form 471 Item 21 attachment provides a detailed description of the products and services in a funding request. Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) needs Item 21 attachments for all of the funding requests in your Form 471 to complete its application review. You can find detailed information on creating and submitting Item 21 attachments in the [Item 21 Attachments guidance](#) on the USAC website.

If you have not already filed your Item 21 attachments, you should either:

- **Submit them directly to your PIA reviewer.** Contact information for your reviewer is on the written list of PIA questions that are either faxed or emailed to you once the review of your application has begun.
- **File them online using your Form 471 application number and security code.** Be sure to push the "Submit" button at the end of the last page of each attachment so that it is available for review. Also, be sure to inform your reviewer that you have submitted your attachment(s) online.

At this point in time, we suggest that you submit your attachments as described above. Although you can also submit your attachments by other means, your reviewer will not have immediate access to them and may not even realize that you have submitted them.

2. Verify your contact information and update it if necessary.

Applicants and service providers provide contact information on each program form and also on each program request, e.g., for a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) change, service substitution, or invoice deadline extension. USAC uses this information to contact the person that submitted the form or request if any questions arise during processing and/or review.

If your contact information is incorrect or outdated, USAC's attempts to contact you may be unsuccessful. This may result in USAC putting your form or request on hold or processing it with the information at hand, which may in turn lead to a denial or a rejection.

You can update your contact information or provide alternative information for USAC to contact you during the summer by following the instructions in the [Contact Information Changes guidance](#) on the website.

3. Respond to any PIA and Selective Review questions.

PIA continues to review applications during the summer. If you do not respond to a request for information by the deadline on the PIA request, PIA will review your application with the information you provided, which may lead to a reduction or denial of funding.

The contact procedures for the summer period – which are defined in the [Deadline for Information Requests](#) guidance document – are now in effect. In other words, if our first attempt to contact you is on or after May 22 and we are unable to make a successful two-way contact with you or someone able to answer our questions, we will put your application on hold and attempt to contact you again on or after September 11.

If you do not want your application placed on hold, you can respond to the PIA request or contact your reviewer to keep the review process moving. If you don't have your reviewer's name or contact information, you can contact the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 1-888-203-8100. To determine if your application is on hold, go to the [Form 471 Application Status tool](#), enter your Billed Entity Number and Funding Year, and click "Search." If the status of your Form 471 is "Unable to Contact," your form is on hold.

Note, however, that if PIA's first attempt to contact you was before May 22 and was successful, you are still subject to the 15-day response deadline unless you requested and were granted an extension.

4. Respond to any Problem Resolution (paper form processing) questions.

USAC continues to process paper forms during the summer as well. If USAC cannot enter data from your paper form, someone from Problem Resolution will contact you to obtain the information we need to complete the processing of your form.

As above, if Problem Resolution cannot make a successful contact with you, we will put the processing of your paper form on hold until after September 11. If it appears that a paper form has not yet been processed, you can find out the status of your form through [Submit a Question](#) or by calling CSB.

5. Submit your BEAR Forms for services already received for FY2008.

Applicants submit a [Form 472, Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement \(BEAR\) Form](#) to request reimbursement of the discount amount from USAC after paying in full for services. Although some applicants wait until the end of the funding year and then submit one BEAR Form for the

entire year, you can submit BEAR Forms monthly, quarterly, or at other intervals as long as you don't duplicate your requests for reimbursement.

If you submit a BEAR Form now, make sure someone is in the office to either deposit the reimbursement check from your service provider or to work with your service provider to give you a credit on your bill.

6. Label and store program-related documents.

FCC rules require you to retain documentation related to the application process and the 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.

For example, gather together copies of your Requests for Proposals (RFP), winning and losing bids, bid evaluation matrices, and any other documentation related to the competitive bidding process immediately after you select the most cost-effective bid and choose your service provider. If those documents are still lying around loose, now would be a good time to collect, organize, and file them.

7. Make sure the technology plan that covers FY2009 services has been approved.

FCC rules require that services other than [basic telephone service](#) be covered by an approved technology plan. Because July 1, 2009 is the first day applicants can receive discounted services for FY2009, technology plans that cover services for FY2009 should have already been approved by a [USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver \(TPA\)](#).

If your current technology plan expires before July 1, 2009 and you don't know if your new plan has been approved, check with your TPA.

- If your plan has been approved, be sure to keep a copy of the technology plan approval letter or other evidence – such as a printout of a TPA webpage listing approved plans – that demonstrates the approval.
- If your plan has not been approved, move quickly to get it approved before services start for FY2009.

8. Subscribe to the Schools and Libraries News Brief from a personal email account.

USAC will continue to issue SL News Briefs each Friday this summer. Along with general program guidance, the News Briefs will include updates that may request or require action before September.

You are welcome to subscribe to the SL News Brief from more than one email account – even if you subscribe from the second account only during the summer months and then unsubscribe when you return in September – by clicking on the "subscribe" link at the bottom of this page. This way you can stay informed if you do not have access to your email account at work during the summer.

9. Start making plans to attend applicant training in the fall.

Registration for fall applicant training has opened (see above). If you would like attend training and need time to obtain permission to travel or for other reasons, you can get your process started. You may want to register now with USAC if you are interested in attending a particular session, as some sessions do fill up quickly.

Remember that USAC does not charge a registration fee to attend the training.

Next week we will cover summer activities for service providers.

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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