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Schools and Libraries News Brief

July 24, 2009

TIP OF THE WEEK: **If you are having trouble finding someone to approve your technology plan, you can request USAC's assistance using the** **Submit a Question** **feature.** Choose "Technology Planning" from the Topic Inquiry menu, then choose "I can't find my Tech Plan Approver on your website" to submit your request.

Commitments for Funding Years 2009 and 2008

Funding Year 2009. USAC will release FY2009 Wave 14 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) July 28. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 1 requests (Telecommunications Services and Internet Access) for schools and libraries at all discount levels. As of July 24, FY2009 commitments total over $633 million.

Funding Year 2008. USAC will release FY2008 Wave 62 FCDLs July 29. This wave includes commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance requests at 88% and above and denials at 86% and below. As of July 24, FY2008 commitments total just under $2.35 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.

Update on Fall Applicant Training

To sign up for one of USAC's fall applicant training sessions, visit the 2009 Schools and Libraries Fall Applicant Trainings page and register for the training that is most convenient for you. You can also find information on the conference hotel for each training session.

There is space available in Orlando, Portland, and Atlanta, and registration for Newark is now open as well. When registration is full for a particular location, USAC will start a waiting list. If your plans change, please email USAC to cancel your registration so USAC can open a slot for someone else.

Update on HATS

In September 2006, USAC began its first visits to applicants under the Helping Applicants To Succeed (HATS) outreach initiative. Through HATS visits, USAC staff – also known as HATS assistants – provide additional assistance to selected program participants.

To find applicants that might benefit from a HATS visit, USAC staff run queries of our application database and identify funding requests that have been reduced, denied, unsuccessfully appealed, or not properly invoiced. We then contact the applicants that have experienced more than one of these issues and offer to conduct a HATS visit.

During the earliest HATS visits, an applicant would receive an in-person visit that covered in detail all of the aspects of the E-rate program. After the overview was concluded, the applicant would have a chance to ask questions and provide feedback.

We are now ramping up our efforts to provide HATS visits to a larger number of applicants, and plan to include service provider visits in the near future. To this end, we can now offer HATS visits by telephone, videoconference, or in person. During a HATS visit, we are also providing outreach that is more targeted to the specific needs of the applicant based on our review of the application history. Although we are still conducting queries to identify participants in need of assistance, applicants and service providers can also request a visit.

HATS visits are not compliance visits. No advance preparation is required. You will not be asked to prepare any documentation, or to show us any of your forms, program documentation, or equipment. While HATS visits can last from one to four hours, a typical visit would last about two hours and consist of the following:

- A discussion of the specific issue or issues that led to the visit.
- A general discussion of program requirements that covers each of the subject areas listed below. If the applicant is familiar with a subject area, it can be covered relatively quickly.
- A demonstration of the search tools and other information available on the USAC website.
- An opportunity to provide feedback on USAC's outreach efforts – such as the website, SL News Briefs, Tip Sheets, and spring and fall training sessions – and to make suggestions for other possible kinds of outreach or program improvements.

The general discussion of program requirements touches on the following areas. Your HATS assistant can spend less time on – or skip – the areas you are familiar with and spend more time on the areas where you have questions or need help.

- Technology planning
- Competitive bidding
- Calculating your discount level
- Form requirements and deadlines
- Understanding USAC's decision letters
- Documenting receipt of services
- Invoicing
- Maintaining required program documentation

If USAC contacts you to schedule a HATS visit, we suggest that you take advantage of the opportunity. We can conduct the visit by telephone or in person. If you have videoconferencing capability, we can also conduct the visit by videoconference.

You can also volunteer for a HATS visit by calling the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 1-888-203-8100. CSB will ask you for the following information and then forward your responses to USAC for consideration:

- Contact person name
- Contact person phone number
- Contact person email address
- Contact who completes the application paperwork (if different from contact person above)
- Billed Entity Name (or names if you apply for more than one Billed Entity)
- Billed Entity Number (or numbers if you apply for more than one Billed Entity)
- Reason(s) for the HATS visit request, such as: prior denials, reductions in funding, a Commitment Adjustment (COMAD), a Recovery of Improperly Disbursed Funds (RIDF) or an unsuccessful appeal.

If you are selected for a HATS visit, someone from USAC will contact you to arrange the details of the visit.

For more information, refer to the [HATS Outreach Initiative](#) on the USAC website.

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.

Please do not reply to this email directly, as it was sent from an unattended mailbox.

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