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Schools and Libraries News Brief

June 25, 2010

TIP OF THE WEEK: If you would like to comment on the two recent NPRMs (FCC 10-83 and FCC 09-105) and/or the draft FY2011 Eligible Services List released by the FCC, keep the deadlines in mind. Comments are due on or before July 9, 2010 and reply comments are due on or before July 26, 2010. Information on how to file comments in included in Public Notice 10-1045.

Commitments for Funding Year 2010

Funding Year 2010. USAC will release FY2010 Wave 6 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) June 29. This wave will include commitments for approved Priority 1 (Telecommunications Services and Internet Access) requests at all discount levels. As of June 25, FY2010 commitments total over $629 million.

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 Applicant Training Registration Continues

The training sessions in Washington, DC and Los Angeles are full and registration has closed. The other six sessions are still open. Please cancel your registration if you cannot attend in order to open a space for someone else.

To register online and to locate information on reserving a room at a conference hotel, go to the Fall 2010 Applicant Training page on the USAC website and click on the link for the training session you wish to attend. You can continue to send questions, cancellations, or requests for information about the fall applicant training to USAC Training.

What Should I – the Service Provider – 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. In the June 18 SL News Brief we discussed tips for applicants; below are some tips for service providers.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

1. Verify your online access to the E-File System.

Service providers file Form 498, *Service Provider Identification Number and Contact Information Form* to obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN). USAC also issues login information for our online E-File System to each service provider that successfully files this form. With this login information, you can access the E-File System to revise your Form 498, assign permissions to employees at your company for online access to specific actions, approve BEAR Forms filed by applicants, and perform other functions.

To get access to your login information:

- If you filed Form 498 on or before October 2005 and have not filed a revision to your form, you will have to file a revision before USAC can send you login information.
- If you filed an original or revised Form 498 after October 2005, you can access USAC's E-File System with the login information provided by USAC.
- Call USAC's Billing, Collections & Disbursement Department (BCD) at 1-888-641-8722 if you have questions or you don't know or can't locate your login information. Note that you should choose option 3, FCC Form 498 – **NOT** option 1, Schools and Libraries.

2. Provide electronic banking information if you have not already done so.

August 31, 2010 is the deadline for service providers to provide electronic banking information on Form 498. USAC will use this information to make payments electronically as required by the FCC. Service providers can provide this information by filing a revision – either online or on paper – to their existing Forms 498.

After August 31, if USAC does not have the required electronic banking information from a service provider, we will stop making payments to that service provider until we have the information. In other words, USAC will not issue paper checks to service providers after that date.

Note that the revision to a Form 498 may require additional information. Two examples of new required information are:

- **A Dun and Bradstreet (D-U-N-S) number.** This number can be obtained from the Dun and Bradstreet website. Note that there is no charge to obtain a D-U-N-S number for government purposes.
- **Study Area Code (SAC) numbers.** Service providers that participate in the High Cost and/or Low Income programs must provide these numbers to establish the appropriate relationship between those numbers and the related SPINs.

For more details about the requirement to provide electronic banking information, you can refer to the FCC's Public Notice DA 10-270, the January 6, 2010 service provider call minutes and the March 3, 2010 service provider call minutes.

3. Review your Form 498 and update any information that has changed.

In addition to electronic banking information, Form 498 has other information that must be kept up-to-date. USAC uses the information on the original or most current revision of your Form 498 to contact you by email, to prepare payment information, and for other communications. Applicants also rely on the service provider information in USAC's SPIN Contact Search tool which pulls directly from the most recent Form 498 information. For these and other reasons, it is important to keep this information up-to-date.

Service providers that participate in the Schools and Libraries Program should maintain current information on the Form 498 for the general contact (Block 2), electronic banking (Block 11), company contact (Block 12), and company officer (Block 15). If you participate in other Universal Service Fund programs, you can provide contact and payment information for those programs as well in the appropriate blocks on the form.

If you have not designated a Schools and Libraries contact – or if any information on your form needs to be updated – you can easily file a revision to your Form 498. If you have login information, you can update your Form 498 online. You can also file a revision on paper. If you have questions, contact BCD (see #1 above) for assistance.

- NOTE: The Schools and Libraries contact is the person at your company who is responsible for the E-rate program, NOT a program applicant.

4. Monitor the progress of any paper forms you submit to USAC.

USAC continues to process paper forms during the summer. For service providers, this includes the Form 473, *Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form* and the Form 474, *Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Form*. If you have not already filed Form 473 for FY2010, now is a good time to do so. Be sure to use the April 2007 version of the form. Remember that USAC will not pay invoices for FY2010 unless the service provider has successfully filed a Form 473 for FY2010 and the applicant has successfully filed a Form 486.

If USAC cannot data enter your paper form because of inconsistent or missing information, someone from Problem Resolution will contact you to obtain the information we need to complete the processing of your form.

Contact procedures for the summer period are now in effect. This means that if Problem Resolution attempts to contact you on or after May 28 and that contact is unsuccessful, your paper form will be put on hold and we will not attempt to contact you again until after September 10. Although these procedures were established to avoid penalizing school applicants when schools are in recess, they apply to other applicants and also to service providers.

If you were on vacation or otherwise unavailable on or after May 28 and you believe we have put your paper form on hold, you can respond to our original request or you can call the Client Service Bureau at 1-888-203-8100 and ask us to locate and process your paper form.

Remember that you can also file Form 474 online or electronically and obviate the need for USAC to process a paper form.

5. Complete your activities related to billing customers and invoicing USAC for any remaining FY2009 recurring services.

June 30, 2010 is the last day to receive recurring services for FY2009. The deadline to invoice USAC for those services is October 28, 2010.

- If you provide discounted bills to your customer and then file SPI Forms:

- Send out all remaining customer bills for the non-discount portion of the services.
- Remind your customers that they are expected to pay your bills within 90 days.
- Respond promptly to USAC requests for information, such as service certifications.

- If you bill your customer in full and your customer files the Form 472, *Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form*:

- Bill your customer for the full cost of the service and remind your customer to pay your bill in full before filing a BEAR Form.
- Remind your customer not to wait until the last minute to file a BEAR Form, as you may need time to review it.
- Review each BEAR Form – either online or on paper – before you approve it.
- Respond promptly to USAC requests for information, such as service certifications.
- Pass the BEAR Form reimbursement amount to your customer within 20 days of receiving it.

6. Log in to the E-File System once a week to check for BEAR Forms filed online.

Applicants continue to file BEAR Forms online and on paper during the summer. If a BEAR Form is filed online, the service provider identified on the form must approve the form online before USAC can process it.

Although USAC sends an email to the service provider immediately after an applicant certifies a BEAR Form online, it is not necessary to wait for the email before taking action. If you log in to the E-File System once a week and review any BEAR Forms awaiting approval, you will not miss any that might otherwise age out of the system and have to be resubmitted.

To approve all or part of a BEAR Form, you must first affirmatively check the box to the right of each line that you approve or check the box that approves all lines. If you click the button at the bottom of the form with no lines checked, the form will be rejected and the applicant will be required to resubmit the form.

7. Assist applicants with responses to PIA review questions if asked.

Applicants may need your help responding to technical or contractual questions from Program Integrity Assurance (PIA). Often a network diagram or other technical information supplied by the service provider will clarify a situation and allow the PIA reviewer to proceed with the application review process.

- If you are on a conference call with the applicant and a PIA reviewer, it would help the applicant if you can summarize the information you provide in an email or other written format. You could also remind the applicant to take notes.
- If you happen to contact a PIA reviewer without the applicant, send the applicant a summary of the information you provide.
- If you send any documentation to a PIA reviewer, copy the applicant on your response.

8. Review USAC's website for posted Forms 470.

In the next several weeks, Form 470 for FY2011 will become available for posting on the USAC website. Although most applicants will wait until this fall to post their FY2011 Forms 470, applicants with long procurement cycles, state replacement contracts, or other situations may post their forms this summer. In addition, some applicants that intend to sign contracts for

(1) FY2011 services and/or (2) FY2010 services under a State Replacement Contract may have also recently posted FY2010 Forms 470 on the USAC website.

You can use the Form 470 Search Posted tool to display individual posted forms or the Form 470 Download tool to download a comma-delimited file containing certain blocks or all blocks of data on posted forms. You can find both of these tools on the Search Tools page on the USAC website.

- If you try to access either tool and you get a timeout message, click the link a second time and you should then be able to access the tool.
- If you use the Form 470 Download tool to create and download a file, you can then open the file in a spreadsheet program and sort the data yourself.

9. Label and file program-related documents.

FCC rules require both applicants and service providers to retain documentation related to the application for, receipt and delivery of discounted services for five years after the last date to receive service.

Most of the documentation needed by auditors and for other program reasons is maintained by applicants. However, service providers have copies of contracts, evidence of payment of customer bills, SPI Forms, and other useful program information. Remember that you can store information electronically – for example, by scanning paper documents and archiving the scanned files.

If you store files electronically, keep in mind that you should use naming conventions that allow you to easily identify and retrieve documents that relate to a particular customer, application, and/or funding year.

10. Consider attending applicant training in the fall.

USAC generally provides service provider training at two locations in the spring and applicant training at a number of locations in the fall. This year, USAC has scheduled applicant training in eight locations around the country.

While the focus of the training is on applicant issues, service providers are welcome to attend training as well. For a list of training locations and hotel information, you can visit the 2010 Schools and Libraries Fall Applicant Training page on the USAC website.

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

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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