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## Schools and Libraries News Brief

August 6, 2010

**TIP OF THE WEEK: If you are submitting a service substitution, do not include a Form 500 to reduce your commitment.** USAC will calculate the appropriate reduction – if any – and process that reduction if your request is approved.

### Commitments for Funding Years 2010 and 2009

**Funding Year 2010.** USAC will release FY2010 Wave 12 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) August 10. This wave will include commitments for approved Priority 2 (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance) requests at 90%. As of August 6, FY2010 commitments total just under \$1.02 billion.

**Funding Year 2009.** USAC will release FY2009 Wave 62 FCDLs August 11. This wave will include commitments for approved Priority 2 requests at 78% and above and denials at 69% and below. As of August 6, FY2009 commitments total over \$2.75 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 Applicant Training Registration Continues

The [Fall 2010 Applicant Training page](#) on the USAC website has information on how to register and how to make hotel reservations for the six training sessions that are still open. Please cancel your registration if your plans change.

For questions, cancellations, or requests for information, you can continue to email [USAC Training](#).

### SERVICE PROVIDERS: Providing New or Updated Information on Form 498

Service providers certify Forms 498 to receive a Service Provider Information Number (SPIN) when they begin to participate in one or more of the four Universal Service Fund (USF) programs: [High Cost](#), [Low Income](#), [Rural Health Care](#), and [Schools and Libraries](#). However, this form also allows service providers to update their information when it changes or to provide new information when it is required.

- Examples of updated information include an address change or a change in contact person or company officer.
- Examples of new information include electronic banking information or a D-U-N-S number.

**Because service providers are required to provide electronic banking information no later than August 31, 2010**, we are including some tips on how to provide this information to USAC.

#### 1. File online.

The first time you file Form 498, USAC will send you a UserID and Password, which you can use to log in to USAC's [E-file System](#). (Note: if you filed your first Form 498 before October 2005 and have never filed an update, you do not have online access and will have to file on paper.) The E-file System gives you access to a number of useful tools, and also provides a mechanism to easily file updates to Form 498 online.

The online system not only guides you through the process, but will compare certain information and let you know if your entries are inconsistent. For example, the system will compare:

- **Your Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and your 499 Filer ID** – if you have one – and let you know if there is a mismatch.
- **Your bank routing number and the list of valid bank routing numbers from the Federal Reserve**, and let you know if the number you provided does not appear on the list.

Note that your General Contact (Block 2 of Form 498) and your Company Contact for Schools and Libraries (Block 12) can submit but not certify changes to the form. The Company Officer (Block 15) will receive an email notification that changes have been submitted and are ready for certification. The form changes are not complete until the Company Officer has certified them.

Remember too that forms filed online are posted the same day. Forms filed on paper take much longer to process (see below).

## **2. Be prepared to provide any new required information.**

Most service providers who have not yet provided electronic banking information will be updating their Forms 498 in order to do so. However, other information is now required on the form, and that information must also be provided before the form can be completed. Here are some examples of new required information:

- **A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B D-U-N-S or DUNS) Number**, which is an industry standard for keeping track of the world's businesses. Unless you need expedited service, you can request either a DUNS number or a DUNS number for government purposes for free from the [Dun and Bradstreet website](#).
- **Electronic banking information for other USF programs.** If you provided information for one or more of the other USF programs on your previous Form 498, you will be required to complete banking information for those programs even if you no longer participate (or never participated) in them.
- **Study Area Codes (SACs).** If you participate in the High Cost and/or Low Income programs, these codes are necessary to establish the appropriate relationship between them and your SPIN.

## **3. If you file on paper, use the online system to complete your paper form.**

As we have discussed above, the online system provides suggestions and error messages to guide you through the completion of your form. If you are filing on paper, you can still take advantage of these helpful messages by completing the form online, printing a copy, and mailing it to USAC.

However, keep the following in mind:

- Processing paper takes time. We ask that you allow 10 days for a paper form to be processed.
- About half of the paper Forms 498 submitted contain errors. We cannot complete processing a paper form until all errors have been corrected.
- As we approach the August 31 deadline, the volume of paper forms will increase and it will take longer to process paper forms.

## **4. Monitor your email.**

We use email notifications when processing your Form 498. It is your responsibility to respond quickly and accurately to any emails from USAC. For example:

- If we find an error on your Form 498, we will send you an email telling you what the error is and how to correct it.
- If the General Contact submits a Form 498 online, we will send an email to the Company Officer identified in our records to notify him or her that the form is ready to be certified.

## **5. Call or email us if you have questions.**

If you are having difficulty filing a form or you have other questions, you can:

- [Email us](#) at any time or
- Call us at 1-888-641-8722. We are open from 9:30 am - 4:30 pm EDT Monday through Friday; if you leave a voicemail message outside of these hours, we will call you back the

next business day.

You can also refer to the following sources:

- Public Notice [DA 09-2126](#) for more information on the requirement for service providers to provide electronic banking information.
- Order [DA 10-999](#) which clarifies that an electronic funds transfer mechanism to distribute universal service support payments invoiced by service providers does not conflict with the FCC's directive that service providers must remit the E-rate discount amount to the applicant "prior to tendering or making use of the payment from the Administrator."
- [January 6, 2010 service provider call minutes](#) on the USAC website for a more complete description of the electronic BEAR payment process.

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