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Schools and Libraries News Brief

September 17, 2010

TIP OF THE WEEK: Remember that service delivery deadline extension requests for non-recurring services must be submitted on or before the last day to receive service. For FY2009 non-recurring services that have not received extensions, this deadline is September 30 (see below).

Commitments for Funding Years 2010 and 2009

Funding Year 2010. USAC will release FY2010 Wave 18 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) September 21. This wave will include commitments for approved Priority 2 (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance) requests at 90%. As of September 17, FY2010 commitments total over \$1.22 billion.

Funding Year 2009. USAC will release FY2009 Wave 67 FCDLs September 22. This wave will include commitments for approved Priority 2 requests at 77% and above and denials at 76% and below. As of September 17, FY2009 commitments total over \$2.77 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 Training Update

As of now, all sessions for the fall 2010 applicant training are full and all registrations are closed. If you have registered for more than one city, please choose which city you plan to attend so that you are not taking up two spaces and others may attend. Unfortunately, unless we receive cancellations, we will not be accepting any more people from the waiting lists.

As a reminder, all of the presentation materials will be posted on the website by September 28 so that you can download them. If you are attending a training session, please remember to bring copies of the presentations with you.

If you still have questions about a training session or wish to cancel your registration, you can [email USAC](#).

APPLICANTS: Get Ready for FY2011

Although we are a few months away from the FY2011 application filing window, applicants and service providers should be working on any remaining issues from earlier funding years in order to simplify their preparations for the FY2011 window. Below are some tips for applicants; next week we will provide tips for service providers.

Finish filing BEAR Forms for FY2009 recurring services.

The invoicing deadline for FY2009 recurring services is October 28, 2010 – less than six weeks from today. We generally receive a large number of both Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Forms 472 and Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Forms 474 close to the invoicing deadline, which results in longer processing times and may necessitate filing an invoice deadline extension request if an invoice is rejected.

Here are some tips to help you clean up invoicing for FY2009:

- **File invoices online if possible.** Applicants with a Personal Identification Number can [file a BEAR Form online](#). Service providers with an E-cert ID and a password [can approve a BEAR Form online](#). If your service providers do not know how to log in to the E-file System, suggest that they call USAC's Billing, Collections, and Disbursement Department at 1-888-641-8722 and select the "Form 498" option.
- **Prepare BEAR Forms in plenty of time for service provider review and approval.** If you wait until late October to file a BEAR Form online or on paper, your service

providers may not have time to review and approve the forms before the deadline. Applicants should ask their service providers how much lead time they need to review forms, and service providers should remind applicants of their required lead time as well. Applicants filing BEAR Forms online can contact their service providers to let them know there are online BEAR Forms awaiting approval.

- **Read the form instructions.** Most of the common mistakes on BEAR Forms can be avoided if you follow the instructions. Again, if you file online, the system reduces errors by populating some related fields and providing warning messages if some required fields are empty.
- **If you file on paper, use the current forms.** If you are filing a [BEAR Form](#) on paper, you must print and fill out **the April 2007 version**. Using the old form will delay the processing of your form. **THIS INCLUDES THE SERVICE PROVIDER SIGNATURE PAGE (PAGE 4).**
- **Verify the amount of funding remaining on your Funding Request Number (FRN).** If you have invoiced USAC for the entire amount of your FRN, USAC will not pay discounts for any additional services received.
- **Use your current contact information.** If USAC has questions about your invoice, we will use the contact information on the invoice to get in touch with you. If we can't get answers to our questions, your invoice may be denied and you will have to resubmit it.
- **Don't file duplicate invoices or line items.** First review your customer bills (the bills sent by the service provider to the applicant) and any previous invoices so that you invoice USAC only for amounts that have not yet been invoiced.

Check the status of FY2009 non-recurring services.

September 30 following the funding year is generally the deadline for delivery and installation of non-recurring services. Although September 30, 2010 is the deadline for FY2009 non-recurring services, it can also be the deadline for services from earlier funding years for which you have received an extension.

Again, here are some tips:

- **Request a service delivery extension no later than September 30 if you need one.** Applicants can request an extension for the delivery and installation of non-recurring services under certain conditions. If September 30, 2010 is your service delivery deadline and you already know that you and your service provider will need more time, you can submit a [service delivery deadline extension request](#). **YOUR REQUEST MUST BE RECEIVED BY USAC OR POSTMARKED ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30.** Requests received or postmarked after this deadline cannot be processed.
- **Check the expiration date on your contract and, if necessary, extend your contract and notify USAC of the new contract expiration date using a Form 500.** USAC will not pay for services delivered after the contract expiration date on file or after the original (or extended) service delivery deadline. Remember also that your contract must allow for an extension.
- **If September 30, 2010 is the last date to receive non-recurring services, then January 28, 2011 is the last day to invoice USAC for those services.** Don't wait until the last minute to gather customer bills and prepare your invoices.

File Form 500 to return funds to USAC that you will not need.

If you have completed invoicing USAC for the cost of services delivered on an FRN and your properly completed invoices have been paid, check to see if any funds remain on the FRN. If so, it would be helpful if you would reduce the committed amount on the FRN to the exact amount you actually used. This action, which you can accomplish by filing a Form 500, returns those unused funds to USAC and makes them available for commitments to other applicants.

- Before you file a Form 500, verify that you have invoiced for all appropriate services, that all of your invoices have been processed, and that USAC has paid the correct total amount on the FRN. Verify that you enter the correct FRN on the Form 500, as reducing a commitment is an irrevocable action.
- Note that you can also file a Form 500 to cancel an FRN. If you received a commitment from USAC on an FRN and you now know that you will not be receiving services under that FRN, you can cancel that FRN by filing a Form 500. Again, because this action is irrevocable, be sure that you identify the correct FRN on the form.

- Always use the current version of the Form 500, which is dated April 2007 in the lower right-hand corner. If you have changes to more than one FRN, use a separate page 2 of the form for each FRN. Note that Form 500 is not available online.

Submit your FY2010 Form 486 if you have not already done so.

If your FY2010 FCDL is dated on or before July 1, 2010 and your service start date is July 1, your deadline to file Form 486 is October 29, 2010. Applicants that wait until the last minute to file Form 486 may cause delays in processing and review at USAC.

Another possible consequence of waiting until the last minute is confusion over USAC's Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letter. USAC now sends out reminder letters to applicants that miss the Form 486 deadline because they either:

- failed to file a Form 486 by the deadline, or
- filed a Form 486 online and then failed to certify it (online or on paper) on or before the deadline.

USAC uses (1) the service start date reported in Item 19 of the Form 471 and (2) the FCDL date to determine when a reminder letter should be sent. USAC tries to identify late filers as soon as possible after the calculated Form 486 filing deadline date so that Forms 486 can be filed or certified promptly. This means that applicants that wait until the last minute to file or certify a form will probably receive one of these letters and become concerned that USAC has not received their form or their certification. Remember that you can always check the status of a form or certification by using [Submit a Question](#) or calling the Client Service Bureau at 1-888-203-8100.

Once you have covered or resolved any remaining issues for previous funding years, it will be time to start thinking about FY2011. Future News Briefs will walk you through the application process from start to finish.

Whistleblower Hotline

USAC maintains a Whistleblower Hotline which allows anyone to contact USAC – anonymously, if desired – to report instances of alleged program rule violations. You can either call our Client Service Bureau at 1-888-203-8100, or [Submit A Question](#) and select "Whistleblower/Code 9 Hotline" from the Topic Inquiry list.

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