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Schools and Libraries News Brief

February 4, 2011

FY2011 WINDOW COUNTDOWN

Days to window close	48
Last day for a Form 470 to be POSTED and still timely file a Form 471 (see below for more information)	Feb. 24, 2011
Forms 470 filed to date	26,153
Forms 471 filed to date	2,979

TIP OF THE WEEK: The invoicing deadline for FY2009 non-recurring services was January 28, 2011. If you still have a BEAR Form 472 or SPI Form 474 to submit to USAC for FY2009 non-recurring services, you must request – and USAC must approve – an [invoicing deadline extension](#) before USAC can process your invoice.

Commitments for Funding Years 2010 and 2009

Funding Year 2010. USAC will release FY2010 Wave 37 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) February 8. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 2 requests (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections) at 81% and above and denials at 79% and below. As of February 4, FY2010 commitments total over \$2.17 billion.

Funding Year 2009. USAC will release FY2009 Wave 80 FCDLs February 9. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 2 requests (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections) at 77% and above and denials at 76% and below. As of February 4, FY2009 commitments total over \$2.79 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.

Application Process: Form 470

[Form 470, Description of Services Requested and Certification Form](#) is the first program form applicants file to request discounts under the E-rate program. In [last week's SL News Brief](#) we discussed the relationship between the technology plan and the Form 470; this week we will discuss the form itself.

By posting a Form 470 on the USAC website, applicants are opening a competitive bidding process. Applicants describe the services they are requesting on the Form 470, and service providers can [search Forms 470](#) or [download summary reports of Forms 470](#) in order to review and respond to applicant requests.

You must file a Form 470 for FY2011 if you:

- Are seeking non-contracted tariffed or month-to-month services.
- Intend to sign a new contract.

- Signed a multi-year contract or a contract with voluntary extensions - without first posting a Form 470 and following all of the competitive bidding rules of the program.

Your Form 470 **MUST:**

- Be based on your technology plan if you are required to have one.
- Be detailed enough for potential bidders to understand your requirements and any reasons for disqualification.
- Be posted for the correct categories of service (Telecommunications Services, Internet Access, Internal Connections, and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections) for the services you are requesting.
- Indicate whether you have issued or will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) and, if so, where it is or will be available to potential bidders (see below).
- Encompass all entities that will receive services – including non-instructional facilities (NIFs).
- Be **posted** on the USAC website for at least 28 days before you close your competitive bidding process; select a service provider; sign a contract (if appropriate); and sign, date, and submit your Form 471.
- Be **certified** before USAC completes the review of any funding requests based on that Form 470.

Your Form 470 **MUST NOT:**

- Be completed or signed by a service provider or feature a service provider as the contact person in Items 6 or 12.
- Be an encyclopedic list of services
- Identify specific vendors, manufacturers, or specific model numbers.

Issuing an RFP

You can prepare and issue an RFP in addition to your Form 470. RFPs are not specifically required under program rules but may be required by your state or local procurement rules or competitive bidding requirements. An RFP describes the project you want to undertake in sufficient detail to inform potential bidders of the scope, location, and any other requirements for the project. You must also clearly indicate any reasons that bidders could be disqualified (in the Form 470 and/or the RFP) and provide information on any other requirements imposed by state or local procurement rules and regulations.

If you issue an RFP, you must indicate that fact and the place the RFP is available (website address, contact person in Item 6 of the form, or technical contact person in Item 12 of the form) on your Form 470. The RFP must remain open for at least 28 days in order to meet the 28-day competitive bidding requirement. This means that if you issue your RFP after you post your Form 470, you must start counting 28 days on the day the RFP was issued, not the date you posted your Form 470.

Whether you post your Form 470 first or issue your RFP first, they must both be available during the final 28 days of the competitive bidding process. For example, if you issued your RFP October 26, 2010 and your Form 470 November 2, 2010, they must BOTH have been available from November 2, 2010 through November 30, 2010 to meet the 28-day requirement.

28-day posting requirement

As noted above, your Form 470 must be posted on the USAC website for 28 days before you choose a service provider, sign a contract (if appropriate), and sign and submit your Form 471. If you file your Form 470 on paper, USAC must completely data enter your form before it can be posted. If you have errors or inconsistencies on your paper Form 470, USAC must contact you to receive the correct information before your Form 470 can be posted to the USAC website. Your 28-day clock does not start until that posting occurs.

The last possible day to **post** a Form 470 to the USAC website is 28 days before the Form 471 application filing window closes. For FY2011, the last possible date to post a Form 470 (and still timely file a Form 471) is **February 24, 2011**. We will make every effort to data enter and post a paper Form 470 if we RECEIVE it in by February 17, but we cannot guarantee how long the posting process will take for a paper form.

If you wait until the last possible day to post your Form 470, you will have to close your competitive bidding process, evaluate the bids received, select your service provider, sign a contract (if applicable), and sign and submit your Form 471 all on the last day of the filing window. If you know now the services you want to request – or even if you only know some of them – you can post a Form 470 now for the services you know and post another Form 470 later for any other services.

You should also take advantage of online filing, as it speeds processing, reduces errors, and provides immediate verification that your form was posted successfully.

Note that the [price of the eligible products and services must be the primary factor](#) in your evaluation. You can consider other factors in your evaluation, but none of the other factors in your bid evaluation can be weighted more heavily than price.

Forms 470 and existing contracts

If you have an existing contract, posting a Form 470 may or may not be necessary.

- **A multi-year contract or contract with voluntary extensions.** If you **did not** post a Form 470 but signed a multi-year contract or a contract with voluntary extensions, you **must** post a Form 470 for FY2011. You can consider your existing contract as a bid response, but you must also evaluate any other bids received. Note that if your existing contract is not the most cost-effective solution with price as the primary factor in your bid evaluation, you will not be able to receive E-rate discounts under your existing contract for FY2011.
- **A contract that resulted from properly posting a Form 470.** If you posted a Form 470 and then signed a multi-year contract or a contract with voluntary extensions that covers (or will cover, if you exercise an extension) all or part of FY2011, you **do not** need to post a new Form 470 for FY2011 for the period covered by that contract. On Item 12 of a Form 471 funding request for services provided under that contract, you can provide the Form 470 application number that opened the competitive bidding process that resulted in that contract (the "establishing Form 470").
- **A contract that expires before the end of the funding year.** If a contract that was signed pursuant to program rules expires before June 30, 2012, you must file a new Form 470 to open a competitive bidding process for any services that would be provided during the part of the funding year not covered by that expired contract.
- If you intend to purchase services from a state master contract, refer to the Reference Area documents [Contract Guidance](#) and [State Replacement Contracts](#) for more information.

Correcting a Form 470

Applicants have the opportunity to make certain limited corrections to information provided on the Form 470 using the [Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter \(RNL\)](#) correction process. Instructions for submitting corrections are contained in your RNL.

If the correction you wish to make is not allowable under program rules, you will have to file a new Form 470. One reason we suggest that you file your Form 470 early is to give yourself a chance to refile your form if necessary.

Here are some examples of information that necessitate posting a new Form 470:

- Indicating on the original Form 470 that you do not and will not have an RFP but then issuing one.
- Forgetting to post for a category of service on the original Form 470.
- Posting for the wrong category of service on the original Form 470 (see below).
- Neglecting to mention on either the original Form 470 or RFP the reasons that service providers or their bids could be disqualified.

Posting for the wrong category of service

USAC will deny a funding request if the category of service posted for the funding request on the Form 471 does not match the category of service posted on the Form 470. In some cases, USAC may change the category of service on the Form 471 from the category posted by the applicant. Applicants should therefore post for all **applicable** categories of service.

- A service that can appear in more than one category should be posted in both. For example, dark fiber or Interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) should be posted in both Item 8 (Telecommunications Services) and Item 9 (Internet Access) on the Form 470.
- A service that could be moved from one category of service to another should be posted in both. For example, during its review of an application, USAC may move a request for [On-premise Priority 1 equipment](#) from Telecommunications Services or Internet Access to Internal Connections because the service does not meet all applicable program requirements. If USAC moves the service to Internal Connections but the applicant did not post for the service in Item 10 (Internal Connections) on the Form 470, USAC will deny the request.

For more information on the Form 470, refer to the [Form 470 guidance](#), the [Form 470](#), and the [Form 470 Instructions](#) posted on the USAC website.

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