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September 14, 2012

TIP OF THE WEEK: If you are filing BEAR Forms or SPI Forms on paper, please do not staple the pages together. Paper clips, rubber bands, and binder clips do not interfere with USAC's scanning process, but staples can deform the paper and delay processing.

Commitments for Funding Years 2012 and 2011

Funding Year 2012. USAC will release FY2012 Wave 11 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) September 18. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 2 (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance) requests at 90% and denials at 89% and below. As of September 14, FY2012 commitments total over \$1.09 billion.

Funding Year 2011. USAC will release FY2011 Wave 61 FCDLs September 19. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 2 requests at 88% and above and denials at 87% and below. As of September 14, FY2011 commitments total over \$2.36 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

The Minneapolis training session still has space available; the other seven sessions are closed or have gone to waiting lists. If you registered for more than one session, please cancel any registration you will not be using to open a space for someone from the waiting list for that session.

Remember also that you must make a room reservation if you want to stay at the conference hotel. The table below shows the last day to make a reservation at the negotiated conference room rate. Rooms may not be available – or may be more expensive – if you try to make a reservation after these dates.

City	Conference Hotel	Reservation Deadline
Washington DC	Renaissance Arlington Capital View	CLOSED*
Dallas TX	Sheraton DFW Airport Hotel	September 17
St. Louis MO	Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel	September 24
Atlanta GA	Renaissance Concourse Atlanta Airport Hotel	September 26
Newark NJ	Newark Liberty International Airport Marriott	September 28
Minneapolis MN	Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America	October 1
Portland OR	Hilton Portland & Executive Tower	September 28
Los Angeles CA	Sheraton Gateway Los Angeles Hotel	October 16

*New reservations will be processed based on availability and may not be at the negotiated rate.

If you have questions or wish to cancel your reservation, please [email USAC](#).

APPLICANTS: Getting Ready for FY2013

Although we are a few months away from the opening of the FY2013 application filing window, applicants and service providers should be working on any remaining issues from earlier funding years. Below are some tips for applicants; in the near future we will provide tips for service providers.

Finish filing BEAR Forms for FY2011 recurring services.

The invoicing deadline for FY2011 recurring services is October 29, 2012 – just over six weeks from today. Here are some tips to help you finish invoicing for FY2011:

- **File invoices online if possible.** Applicants with a Personal Identification Number (PIN) can [file a BEAR Form \(FCC Form 472\) 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 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 your form 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 that have filed BEAR Forms online can contact their service providers to let them know there are online BEAR Forms awaiting approval.
- **Read the [BEAR Form instructions](#).** Most of the common mistakes on BEAR Forms can be avoided by following the instructions. Again, if you file online, the system populates some related fields for you and provides 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. **THE SERVICE PROVIDER SIGNATURE PAGE (PAGE 4) MUST ALSO BE THE APRIL 2007 VERSION.**
- **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 rejected 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 FY2011 non-recurring services.

September 30 following the funding year is generally the deadline for delivery and installation of non-recurring services. Although September 30, 2012 is the deadline for FY2011 non-recurring services if no extension has been granted, 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 and service providers can request an extension for the delivery and installation of non-recurring services under certain conditions. If September 30, 2012 is your service delivery deadline and you and your service provider will need more time, you can submit a [service delivery deadline extension request](#). **YOUR REQUEST MUST BE RECEIVED 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 an FCC 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, 2012 is the last date to receive non-recurring services, then January 28, 2013 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 FCC Form 500 to return unused funds to USAC.

If you have completed invoicing USAC for the 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 an [FCC Form 500](#), Adjustment to Funding Commitment and Modification to Receipt of Service Confirmation Form, returns those unused funds to USAC and makes them available for commitments to other applicants.

- Before you file an FCC Form 500, verify that you or your service provider has invoiced for all appropriate services, that all of the invoices have been processed, and that USAC has paid the correct total amount on the FRN. Verify also that you enter the correct FRN on the FCC Form 500, as reducing a commitment is an irrevocable action.

- Note that you can also file an FCC 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 an FCC 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 FCC 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 FCC Form 500 is not available online.

Submit your FY2012 FCC Form 486 if you have not already done so.

In general, if committed FRNs are featured on an FCDL dated on or before July 1 and the service start date on those FRNs is July 1, the deadline to file an FCC Form 486 featuring those FRNs is October 29. (Because the first funding wave for FY2012 was issued July 10, 2012, the earliest deadline for FY2012 FRNs is November 7, 2012.) Applicants that wait until the last minute to file FCC Form 486 may cause delays in processing and review at USAC.

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

- failed to file an FCC Form 486 by the deadline, or
- filed an FCC 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 FCC 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 FCC Form 486 filing deadline date so that they can quickly file their forms without penalty. 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 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.

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