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January 18, 2013

FY2013 WINDOW COUNTDOWN

Days to window close	55
FCC Forms 470 filed to date	23,341
FCC Forms 471 filed to date	2,268
Online Item 21 attachments filed to date	4,183

TIP OF THE WEEK: Be sure to set aside enough time to work on your **Item 21 attachments for your FCC Form 471 Block 5 funding requests; Item 21 attachments are a window filing requirement.** We encourage you to submit them [online](#), but you can also submit them by [email](#), by fax to (973) 599-6511, or by delivery service or mail as indicated in the [Item 21 Attachments](#) document on the USAC website.

Commitments for Funding Years 2012, 2011, and 2010

Funding Year 2012. USAC will release FY2012 Wave 27 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) January 23. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 2 (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance) requests at 90% and denials at 89% and below. As of January 18, FY2012 commitments total just under \$1.74 billion.

Funding Year 2011. USAC will release FY2011 Wave 77 FCDLs January 24. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 2 requests at 88% and above and denials at 87% and below. As of January 18, FY2011 commitments total over \$2.50 billion.

Funding Year 2010. USAC will release FY2010 Wave 107 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) January 25. This wave can include commitments for approved Priority 2 requests at all discount levels. As of January 18, FY2010 commitments total over \$3.08 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.

Evaluating Bids

In the [January 11 SL News Brief](#) we provided guidance on receiving responses from bidders to a posted FCC Form 470 and/or Request for Proposal (RFP). In this issue we discuss the bid evaluation process.

Closing your competitive bidding process

When you post an FCC Form 470 to the USAC website, the system calculates your Allowable Vendor Selection/Contract Date (ACD). The ACD is the earliest date that you can close your competitive bidding process, evaluate bids, select a service provider, sign a contract (if applicable), and sign and submit your FCC Form 471.

The system calculates the ACD as the date 28 days after the form is posted to the website. However, keep in mind that if you issue an RFP after the form is posted, your actual ACD is 28 days after the RFP is publicly available. Moreover, if you make a significant change to the scope of your project or the

services you are requesting or take any other action that involves posting a new FCC Form 470, your ACD will change. (See the [January 11 SL News Brief](#) for more information.)

On or after your ACD, you can close your competitive bidding process and evaluate the bids you have received. Remember that if you receive only one bid – or no bids – you can keep your competitive bidding process open and contact service providers to solicit bids.

Disqualification reasons

You may decide that you will only accept bids that meet certain requirements, and disqualify bids that do not meet those requirements. However, you must state those disqualification reasons in your FCC Form 470 and/or RFP.

Disqualification reasons must be binary – i.e., the bidder or the bid either meets the requirement or does not meet the requirement. Here are some examples of disqualification reasons:

- The service provider must be bonded.
- The service provider must have a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN).
- The bid must contain responses to all five of the questions listed in Section 1 of the RFP.

Bids that do not meet the requirements can be disqualified and not evaluated further.

Constructing an evaluation

To evaluate the bids you receive, you must [construct an evaluation](#). You decide what factors you want to consider in your evaluation and how important each factor is to you. You can use as few or as many evaluation factors as you like, and you can assign percentages or points to the factors you use to reflect their relative importance. You must always include the price of the eligible products and services as a factor, and that factor must be weighted more heavily than any other single factor.

For each bid, you can evaluate how well it meets each of the factors and assign a point value or percentage as appropriate. By totaling the scores for each bid, you can arrive at the most cost-effective bid.

Preparing a bid evaluation matrix helps you evaluate bids and also provides documentation of the process you followed to select your service provider. In addition to the document [Constructing an Evaluation](#), the USAC website features a [sample bid evaluation matrix](#) you can use as a guide.

Requesting tariffed/month-to-month services and contracted services

You can receive services:

- **Under tariff or on a month-to-month basis.** Services such as basic telephone service or Internet access may not require a contract. You must post an FCC Form 470 and open a competitive bidding process for these services each year – e.g., for FY2013, you must post an FY2013 FCC Form 470 and cite that form in Item 12 of an FY2013 FCC Form 471.
- **Under a contract.** Tariffed or month-to-month services provided under a contract are considered to be contracted services. Also, internal connections and basic maintenance products and services are generally provided under a contract. If you sign a multi-year contract resulting from an FCC Form 470 posting, that form becomes the "establishing FCC Form 470" and you do not have to post an FCC Form 470 or open a competitive bidding process again for the life of that contract.

Retaining documentation

We continue to stress that applicants and service providers must retain all documents related to the application for, receipt, and delivery of discounted telecommunications and other supported service for at least five years after the last day of service delivered in a particular funding year. Documents to retain as part of the competitive bidding process include but are not limited to:

- The FCC Form 470
- The RFP, if one is issued
- Questions from potential bidders and your answers
- Copies of winning **and losing** bids (including disqualified bids)
- The final bid evaluation matrix and any supporting documentation
- The contract, if one is signed.

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