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December 20, 2013

**TIP OF THE WEEK:** If your PIA reviewer made a successful contact before today (see below), your 15-day response clock has started. Be sure to check your preferred mode of contact – telephone, fax, or email – for communications from USAC so that you can respond appropriately.

**Please note that USAC will not issue a News Brief next Friday, December 27. Also, the Client Service Bureau will be closed Tuesday, December 24 and Wednesday, December 25.**

### Commitments for Funding Years 2013, 2012, and 2011

**Funding Year 2013.** USAC will release Funding Year (FY) 2013 Wave 32 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) December 27. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 1 (Telecommunications Services and Internet Access) requests at all discount levels. As of December 20, FY2013 commitments total over \$1.58 billion and encompass 32,963 of FY2013 applications.

**Funding Year 2012.** USAC will release FY2012 Wave 73 FCDLs December 30. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 2 (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance) requests at 90 percent and denials at 89 percent and below. As of December 20, FY2012 commitments total over \$2.81 billion.

**Funding Year 2011.** USAC will release FY2011 Wave 106 FCDLs December 20. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 2 requests at 88 percent and above and denials at 87 percent and below. As of December 20, FY2011 commitments total just under \$2.66 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.

### PQA Requests for Information Arriving in January

The 2014 Payment Quality Assurance (PQA) assessment program will begin in January 2014. PQA is a program that assesses E-rate payments made during the current year to verify that they were properly made – in other words, that all program rules were followed correctly when the payment was authorized and disbursed.

Emails notifying applicants whose payments have been selected for PQA will be sent from the domain name **usac.i-sight.com**. Please check your email and respond promptly if you receive an email from USAC's PQA Program. This will help expedite your review.

- Do not hesitate to contact your reviewer if you have questions. Contact information is provided in the email.
- Also, contact your PQA reviewer if you are unable to respond by the deadline.

For disbursements made each month in calendar year 2013, a certain number of payments will be chosen randomly, and applicants will be asked to provide specific documentation – for example, customer bills that support invoices submitted to USAC – to verify that those payments were made correctly. It is important that you maintain proper documentation in order to be able to respond correctly and completely to PQA requests. You can review the [E-rate Binder](#) on the USAC website for a list of documents to retain.

USAC is required to provide the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) with information about improper payments, as required by the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010 (IPERA). USAC uses the PQA assessments to estimate the rate of improper payments and provides this information to the FCC annually. USAC's goal is to ensure that the dollar amount of all improper payments is below 1.5 percent of the total dollar amounts disbursed.

For more information on this program, you can review the [PQA Program](#) document on the USAC website.

## Winter Contact Period Starts Today

USAC has procedures to contact applicants and service providers if more information is necessary to process a form. Below we discuss two of the most common situations where USAC needs more information:

- **Problem Resolution.** If USAC cannot data enter a paper form because information is missing or inconsistent, Problem Resolution will attempt to reach the contact person listed on the form (or in our database, if no contact information is provided on the form) to obtain the necessary information.
- **Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review.** If USAC needs more information from an applicant to complete the review of an application, a PIA initial reviewer will use the contact information provided on the form to send questions and to inform the applicant of any correctable errors discovered on the form during review.

We realize that, during a summer period and a winter period each year, many applicants are unavailable due to extended holiday and break schedules.

- Our winter period is defined as the Friday before Christmas Day through the Friday after New Year's Day.
- The dates of the current winter period are December 20, 2013 through January 3, 2014.

If our first attempt to reach you is on or after December 20, and we cannot confirm by telephone that you are available to respond to our questions, we will not begin Problem Resolution or PIA review until after January 3. However, if we have made a successful contact with you before December 20, your 15-day response clock has started and we will act on the information we have on hand if we have not heard from you by the response deadline. We define a successful contact as:

- A sent email message with no return notification of non-delivery or out-of-office response
- A sent fax with a confirmation of successful transmission
- A voicemail left at the contact person's telephone number if the recorded greeting does not state that the contact person is out of the office
- A live person answering our call at the contact telephone number or a return call responding to our message.

If PIA has already contacted you and you wish to designate someone to answer questions in your absence, be sure to send your designee's contact information to your PIA reviewer. If PIA has not contacted you and your designee will be checking your messages, be sure that you have provided written authorization for your designee to answer questions about your application. PIA will request this authorization in case any changes need to be made.

Your designee should have sufficient knowledge of your application to respond accurately. If someone answers a call from PIA but is not in a position to answer PIA questions, make sure the PIA reviewer understands that the application review should be put on hold until you return.

Reminders:

- **PIA will be actively reviewing applications during the winter period.** If you can respond to PIA questions at this time, please do so - it will speed the processing of your application.
- **If our first successful contact with you was before December 20, your 15-day response clock is ticking.** Be sure to respond by the deadline or let us know that you need more time to prepare your response.
- **Continue to monitor your preferred mode of contact if you are working.** If you or your designee can respond to questions, the processing of your application can continue.
- **If you are not available to respond to questions, it would be helpful for you to indicate this via your preferred mode of contact** (e.g., an out-of-office message on email or voicemail). We will not continue to leave messages or send emails if we know you are unavailable.

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