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July 1, 2016

TIP OF THE WEEK: APPLICANTS: Get ready for the new BEAR reimbursement process if you intend to file BEAR Forms for any funding year. Be sure to review the information below so that you have everything in place before you file your first BEAR Form.

Update on Funding Year 2016 Waves

Wave 2. USAC is hard at work on the second wave for Funding Year (FY) 2016. We will provide an update in the very near future.

Wave 1 FCDL regeneration. Last week we mentioned that a technical challenge impacted Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) for a small number of applicants and service providers in Wave 1. We have now resolved the remaining issues and emailed all affected applicants and service providers with instructions on how to regenerate their letters.

You do not have to have received the email to regenerate your letter(s):

- Log in to EPC and go to the **Notifications** section of your organization's landing page.
- Find the appropriate FCDL notification line and click "Generate Notification" in the far right-hand column of that line. The text will change to "View Notification."
- Clicking the "View Notification" text allows you and other users on your account to view the regenerated FCDL.

Improvements to FCDL files. Starting with Wave 2, applicants and service providers will notice the following improvements in the CSV files and – for service providers – the FSP files attached to their FCDLs:

- CSV files will contain the Billed Entity Number (BEN) and the name of the applicant on each line.
- FSP files will contain the following formatting changes:
 - The date format has been changed from YYYY-MM-DD to MM/DD/YYYY.
 - The extra pipes ("|") at the end of the each record (line) will be removed.
 - The total number of records indicated at the bottom of the file is the correct number of records.
 - The service provider name and SPIN will appear in the file name.
 - A dollar sign ("\$\$") will not appear in any of the cost fields.
 - Quotes (" ") will not appear at the beginning and end of any of the cost fields.
 - The area code will appear in a separate field (separated by a pipe) from the 7-digit telephone number.

We hope these changes will be useful to you and we appreciate your patience.

Commitments for Funding Year 2015

Funding Year 2015. USAC will release FY2015 Wave 57 FCDLs on July 8. This wave includes commitments for approved requests for all service types and at all discount levels. As of July 1, FY2015 commitments total just under \$3.31 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.

Remember that FCDLs for FY2015 will continue to be printed and mailed to applicants and service providers. Service providers who have signed up to receive electronic notifications will continue to have electronic notification files emailed to them.

Direct BEAR Reimbursement Process Reminders

Starting today, applicants can request direct reimbursement for the discount portion of the costs for approved eligible products and services that they have paid for in full. Before applicants can be reimbursed by filing an FCC Form 472, Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement Form, the following must occur:

- The applicant has certified – and USAC has successfully processed – an FCC Form 486. You can review the [June 10 SL News Brief](#) for detailed guidance in filing this form.
- The service provider has certified an FCC Form 473 for the appropriate funding year.
- The applicant has certified – and USAC has successfully processed – an FCC Form 498.
- The applicant must have a Personal Identification Number (PIN).

Below are some reminders and some updated information about the direct BEAR process. You can also refer to the [May 20 SL News Brief](#) for the information you will need to get ready.

Service providers - FCC Form 473, Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form

Where to file: The SPAC Form for service providers is now available in the [E-file System](#), not through EPC. Service providers can log in to this system as usual, and they will see "SPAC Forms" as an option.

What you will need: Your Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN). If you have more than one SPIN, you file a separate SPAC Form for each SPIN.

Note that USAC will not process any paper SPAC Forms for FY2016. As of today, service providers are strongly encouraged to complete and certify SPAC Forms online for all funding years.

- The form will pre-populate much of the information required based on the identity of the filer. If you notice that the contact information in your E-File System profile (not your EPC profile) does not populate correctly, you can exit the FCC Form 473, correct your E-File profile information, and then re-enter your form.
- The dropdown in the form that lists funding years will only show funding years for which a SPAC Form has not yet been filed.
- Immediately after the SPAC Form is certified for any funding year – including FY2016 – the appropriate funding year will appear in the [Search for SPIN Information tool](#).

Applicants - FCC Form 498, Service Provider and Billed Entity Identification Number and General Contact Information Form

Where to file: Click the "Related Actions" link on the left-hand menu on your organization's profile page in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC), then click "Create FCC Form 498."

What you will need:

- Permissions for two roles: School or Library Official and General Financial Contact. The account administrator can set these up by clicking "Manage Users" on the organization's landing page, then "Manage User Permissions." The permissions for the FCC Form 498 are located in the "498 Permission" column.
- Your federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) or taxpayer identification number.
- Your DUNS number. If you do not already have a DUNS number, you can apply for one through the [Dun & Bradstreet website](#).
- Your FCC Registration Number (FCC RN). If you do not yet have an FCC RN, you can apply for one on the FCC's [CORES website](#).
- The bank name, routing number, and account number for the bank account where USAC should send direct BEAR reimbursements.

You can refer to the [May 20 SL News Brief](#) for detailed information on each of these requirements.

The 498 ID that you receive when you successfully file an FCC Form 498 is a separate number from your Billed Entity Number (BEN). The 498 ID will appear during the filing process when you file a BEAR Form.

Applicants - FCC Form 472, Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form

Where to file: Applicants access the BEAR Form from the legacy system, not from EPC.

- On the [Forms page](#), click the "File Online" link in the FCC Form 472 section.
- On the [Apply for E-rate page](#), click the "Start Your Form 472" button.

What you will need:

- Your Billed Entity Number.
- Your Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you do not already have a PIN, call the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at (888) 203-8100 for information on how to get one. You can review the [June 24 SL News Brief](#) for more information. You do not need a new PIN if you already have one.
- A funded Funding Request Number (FRN) under which you have already received discounted service and paid for that service in full.

Applicants now file BEAR Forms online for all funding years without service provider review and approval. Note that BEAR Forms filed on paper and postmarked on or after today will not be processed.

Service providers - FCC Form 474, Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Form

Service providers no longer have the option of filing SPI Forms on paper. The processes for filing SPI Forms online and for invoicing USAC electronically will remain essentially the same.

Last Week in "File Along with Me":

- What to Expect During PIA Review. [Read More](#)

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