Universal Service Administrative Co.

Schools and Libraries Program News Brief

August 7, 2020

> **TIP OF THE WEEK:** Review the information below if you intend to invoice USAC by filing BEAR Forms and have not yet certified an applicant FCC Form 498. Remember that you need to recertify your form if you have made any changes, such as updating your banking information.

Commitments for Funding Year (FY) 2020 and FY2019

FY2020. USAC released FY2020 Wave 14 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on August 6. As of August 7, FY2020 commitments total over $1.29 billion.

FY2019. USAC released FY2019 Wave 69 on August 5. As of August 7, FY2019 commitments total over $2.40 billion.

On the date that FCDLs are issued, you can access your FCDL notification from the **Notifications** section of your landing page in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC).

Filing the Applicant Version of the FCC Form 498

Applicants who want to request reimbursements directly from USAC by submitting an FCC Form 472, Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form, must first certify an FCC Form 498, Service Provider and Billed Entity Identification Number and General Contact Information Form. USAC must review and approve your FCC Form 498 before you can receive your 498 ID, the identifying number that will appear at the top of your BEAR Form after you log in.

You do not have to re-file an FCC Form 498 if you already have an approved form. Be sure, however, to review and update your form if any of your information has changed.

If you are filing for the first time, you should be ready with the following:

 - School or Library Official and General Financial Contact

Your **School or Library Official** is someone who occupies a position of authority – for example, a superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, library director, assistant library director, county administrator, district administrator, or state education department or state library lead. This person must be authorized to certify that the information provided in the FCC Form 498 is true, accurate, and complete. **The School or Library Official cannot be a consultant.**

Your **General Financial Contact** must be authorized by your organization to retrieve the FCC Form 498 information and obtain access to USAC's online filing system. This person will be able to complete but not certify updates to the FCC Form 498. The General Financial Contact can be a consultant.

Your account administrator assigns the rights (permissions) for these two roles to the appropriate individual(s). The same person can be assigned to both roles (unless that person is a consultant).

 - Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number

DUNS, or Data Universal Numbering System, is a proprietary system developed and regulated by Dun & Bradstreet that will, upon request, assign a unique number to a single business entity. An entity required to register with the federal government for contracts or grants can get a DUNS number for free.

The DUNS Number area of the Dun & Bradstreet website provides options to look up a DUNS number and to request a DUNS Number if you do not already have one.

 - FCC Registration Number

An FCC Registration Number (FCC RN) is required by all entities that do business with the FCC. If you do not yet have an FCC RN, you can apply for one on the FCC's CORES website.

Note to avoid confusion: The FCC website refers to these numbers as "FRNs." In the E-rate Program, we use the initialism "FRN" to stand for Funding Request Number, the identifying number assigned by EPC to each funding request on an FCC Form 471.

 - Bank account information for direct payments

To identify the bank account where you want USAC to send your direct payments, you will be asked to provide your bank's name, your bank's routing number, and your account number at the bank.

The bank account information provided on the form cannot be for a bank account owned by a consultant.

Starting the FCC Form 498

To start, the School or Library Official or General Financial Contact logs in to One Portal, chooses EPC, clicks the organization name on the landing page, chooses **Related Actions**, and then **Create FCC Form 498**. If you are not the School or Library Official or the General Financial Contact, you will not see a link to create an FCC Form 498.

Fields that must be completed will be outlined in red if they are empty when you try to move to the next screen. You can skip fields that are not required.

Here is some additional information for fields where the entries or actions may not be obvious:

- Remittance Contact and Financial Information

The Remittance Contact is the person who will be notified when the deposit of a BEAR payment is made. This person does not have to be set up as a user in EPC; you can simply enter their contact information in the fields provided.

The financial information consists of the following fields:

- **Remittance Financial Institution** is the name of the bank where the account is held.
- **ACH Financial Institution Transit Number** is the nine-digit number that identifies the bank.
- **Financial Institution Account Number for ACH** is the number that identifies the appropriate bank account.

- Associated BENs

In most cases, you file for a single Billed Entity Number (BEN) - the entity number of the organization that files your program forms. However, there are some situations where another entity – not the filer of the FCC Form 498 – is also authorized to request reimbursements. If so, you can add that entity's BEN to your form as an associated BEN.

For example, a consortium could file an FCC Form 471 for all of its members, but one member pays directly for one of the services on the form. Or an entity that was an independent entity in the previous funding year is now a dependent entity in this funding year, but the entity wants to complete its invoicing process for the previous funding year and be reimbursed directly.

Remember that payments requested under a specific 498 ID will be made to the bank account identified on the FCC Form 498 for that 498 ID. In the examples above, each billed entity would file two FCC Forms 498 and feature a different bank account (and a different 498 ID) on each form.

- Certification

If the General Financial Contact is completing the form, they must send the form to the School or Library Official for certification after they have reviewed it for completeness and accuracy. The system will then create a task for the School or Library Official to review and certify the form.

After accepting the task, the School or Library Official should review the form and use the **Back** button to make any necessary changes. Once all of the information has been verified, the School or Library Official can certify the form.

The School or Library Official can also complete and certify the entire form.

If you are updating an existing FCC Form 498, any changes you make must be certified by the School or Library Official before those changes will go into effect.

USAC review of the FCC Form 498

After you certify your form for the first time – or you update your Additional BENs and/or your bank account information on your existing form – USAC must review your form.

We will ask you for proof of your bank account information, such as a bank statement or canceled check. After we have verified and approved your documentation, your form status will change from "Certified" to "Approved" and your 498 ID will show up at the top of your BEAR Form after you log in.

You can upload your bank account documentation to our secure server immediately after you certify your form. You do not have to wait for us to notify you.

Finally, to check the status of your form, you can use the FCC Form 498 Status Tool located on the Tools page on the USAC website.

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