

## SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES PROGRAM

# NEWS BRIEF

October 17, 2014

Please continue to check the [E-rate Modernization Order web page](#) for links to additional information.

**TIP OF THE WEEK:** If you have a commitment from USAC for FY2014 and your services have started, you should be preparing to file – or have already filed – an FY2014 FCC Form 486. October 29, 2014 is the deadline for filing this form if your service start date is July 1, 2014 and your FCDL is dated on or before July 1.

## Commitments for Funding Years 2014, 2013, and 2012

**Funding Year 2014.** USAC will release Funding Year (FY) 2014 Wave 24 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on October 22. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 1 (Telecommunications Services and Internet Access) requests at all discount levels. As of October 17, FY2014 commitments total over \$2.03 billion.

**Funding Year 2013.** USAC will release FY2013 Wave 70 FCDLs on October 23. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 1 requests at all discount levels. As of October 17, FY2013 commitments total just over \$2.12 billion.

**Funding Year 2012.** USAC will release FY2012 Wave 95 FCDLs on October 21. 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 October 17, FY2012 commitments total just under \$2.86 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.

## Service providers: Preparing for FY2015

Although we are a few months away from the FY2015 application filing window, applicants and service providers should be working on any remaining issues from earlier funding years. Below are some tips for service providers; in the [October 10 SL News Brief](#) we provided tips for applicants.

### Review the *E-rate Modernization Order* and related materials.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted the [E-rate Modernization Order](#) on July 11, 2014. The Order takes major steps to modernize and streamline the E-rate program and focuses on expanding funding for Wi-Fi networks in eligible elementary and secondary schools and libraries across America.

The Order puts a number of program changes in place for FY2015. We strongly suggest that you start by reviewing the materials on the [E-rate Modernization Order web page](#) on the USAC website. Pay special attention to changes in the following for FY2015:

- Program forms, form submission, and deadlines
- Competitive bidding and contracts
- Determination of urban or rural status
- Discount calculations, including the Community Eligibility Provision of the National School Lunch

- Program (NSLP)
- Definitions of Category One and Category Two
- Applicant budgets for Category Two services
- Eligible services
- Filing appeals
- Invoicing and invoice deadline extension requests

### **File FCC Forms 473 for FY2013 and FY2014 if you have not already done so.**

[FCC Form 473](#), Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form, must be filed each funding year before invoices for that funding year can be paid.

If you have not yet filed this form for one or more funding years, you should do so as soon as possible. If you have more than one Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN), remember that you must file a separate SPAC Form for each SPIN. If you have filed the form but you are not sure if USAC has successfully processed it, [search for SPIN information](#) on the USAC website and review the list of funding years in the "SPAC Filed" (far right-hand) column of the search results.

SPAC Forms must be filed on paper using the version of the form dated July 2013.

### **Verify that USAC has your current information on FCC Form 498.**

Service providers file [FCC Form 498](#), Service Provider Identification Number and General Contact Information Form, to get a SPIN and to provide USAC with correct contact and remittance information. The original FCC Form 498 must be filed on paper but you can update the form using the [E-file System](#).

It is important to keep the information on this form current.

- To review the contact information on your FCC Form 498 that is available to applicants, go to the [Search for SPIN Information tool](#).
- To review other information on your form, you will have to log in to the [E-file System](#) with your User ID and password. If you need help, call USAC's Billing, Collections and Disbursements Department (BCD) at 1-888-641-8722 (choose the "FCC Form 498" option) for assistance.

Note that in some cases you may have to file a revision to your FCC Form 498 on paper before USAC can issue a User ID and password. Once you are able to log in to the E-file System, your company officer of record can update your information online.

### **Finish filing FCC Forms 474 (SPI Forms) for FY2013 recurring services.**

The invoicing deadline for FY2013 recurring services is October 28, 2014 – less than two weeks away. USAC generally receives a large number of invoices – both [FCC Form 472](#), Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form, and [FCC Form 474](#), Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Form – close to the invoicing deadline, which results in longer processing times.

All service providers can [file SPI Forms online](#). Service providers that invoice USAC frequently and would like to file invoices electronically can follow the [instructions for setting up electronic invoicing](#). Service providers that file SPI Forms [on paper](#) must use the July 2013 version of the form.

### **Finish approving FCC Forms 472 (BEAR Forms) for FY2013 recurring services.**

Whether applicants file BEAR Forms online or on paper, you must approve those forms before USAC can review them. Following are some tips to assist you in the approval process:

- **Tell your customers how long it will take you to review and approve BEAR Forms.** Applicants that file BEAR Forms often wait until close to the USAC invoicing deadline to file online or to send paper BEAR Forms to service providers for approval. You should clearly communicate to your customers how much lead time you need to review and approve the forms to avoid processing delays.
- **Approve BEAR Forms online.** Service providers with a User ID and a password can [approve BEAR Forms online](#). If you don't know your User ID and password, call BCD (see above) for assistance.
- **If you are approving BEAR Forms online, log in to the [E-file System](#) once each week to see if any forms are awaiting your approval.** USAC sends an email to the service provider when a BEAR Form is filed online, but service providers are not required to wait for an email to arrive before approving a BEAR Form. If you log in to the E-file System once a week, you will be

able to review BEAR Forms in a timely manner.

- **If the applicant files on paper, check the footer date on your signature page.** If the applicant does not submit all pages using **the July 2013 version** of the form, USAC will request a corrected submission and the processing of the form can be delayed. Remember that you cannot sign page 3 (Block 3, Billed Entity Certification, Item 15) and the applicant cannot sign page 4 (Block 4, Service Provider Acknowledgment, Item 21).
- **Use your current contact information and update where necessary.** 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 denied and you will have to resubmit.
- **Don't file duplicate invoices or line items.** First check your customer bills (the bills sent by the service provider to the customer) and any previous invoices so that you invoice USAC only for amounts that have not yet been invoiced.

**Check the status of non-recurring services with a service delivery deadline of September 30, 2014.**

September 30 following the funding year is generally the deadline for delivery and installation of non-recurring services. While September 30, 2014 is the deadline for most FY2013 non-recurring services, it can also be the extended deadline for services from other funding years.

Again, here are some tips:

- **If you need more time to deliver and install services but the applicant did not request a service delivery extension on the FCC Form 500, Funding Commitment Adjustment Request Form, on or before September 30, you or the applicant must request a waiver from the FCC.** USAC cannot process these deadline extension requests if they are received or postmarked after the service delivery deadline.
- Check the expiration date on your contract and, if necessary, (1) work with your customer to extend your contract and (2) ask your customer to notify USAC of the new contract expiration date using an FCC Form 500.
- **If September 30, 2014 is the last date to receive non-recurring services, then January 28, 2015 is the deadline to invoice USAC for those services.** Don't wait until the last minute to gather customer bills and prepare SPI Forms or approve BEAR Forms.  
**USAC will not pay for services delivered after the contract expiration date on file or after the original (or extended) service delivery deadline.**

**Verify that your customers have submitted FCC Forms 486 for FY2014.**

In general, if an FCDL featuring a funded Funding Request Number (FRN) is dated on or before July 1 and the service start date is July 1, the deadline to file an FCC Form 486 for that FRN is October 29. Applicants that wait until the last minute to file an FCC Form 486 may cause delays in processing and review at USAC.

Applicants that wait until the last minute are also likely to get confused by USAC's [Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letter](#). USAC sends out reminder letters to applicants that miss the FCC Form 486 deadline because they either:

- fail to file an FCC Form 486 by the deadline, or
- file an FCC Form 486 online and then fail to certify it by 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 these forms can be filed or certified promptly. 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 their certification.

Because USAC will not pay invoices until an FCC Form 486 has been successfully processed, it is important to check with your customers to make sure that they have filed the form. Once USAC has reviewed and approved the form, USAC will issue an [FCC Form 486 Notification Letter to the service provider](#) and the applicant.

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