January 8, 2016

TIP OF THE WEEK: The invoicing deadline for FY2014 non-recurring services is January 28, 2016. If you need an extension of this deadline, you must request it on or before January 28; otherwise, complete your invoicing processes (including service provider approval of BEAR Forms) on or before January 28.

Commitments for Funding Years 2015 and 2014

Funding Year 2015. USAC released Funding Year (FY) 2015 Wave 31 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on January 7 and will release Wave 32 FCDLs on January 14. These waves include commitments for approved requests for all service types and at all discount levels. As of January 8, FY2015 commitments total just under $2.90 billion.

Funding Year 2014. USAC released FY2014 Wave 73 FCDLs on December 31. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 1 (Telecommunications Services and Internet Access) requests at all discount levels. As of January 8, FY2014 commitments total just under $2.28 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.

E-rate Productivity Center - What You Should Be Doing Now

On June 24, 2015, USAC started rolling out the first phase of the E-rate Productivity Center or EPC (pronounced "epic") – a customer portal for applicants, service providers, consultants, and other program participants. This portal will eventually be the point of entry for all transactions with USAC, and once fully operational will provide a host of new features and better customer service.

Advantages of a portal

The portal has certain advantages, some of which you can be using now:

- All of your forms, submitted documentation, and requests will be in one location online and easily accessible. You can file an FCC Form 470 in EPC now (see below).
- School districts and library systems can update and store address information and other data on their individual schools and libraries. This information can then be uploaded into online forms so that you do not have to re-enter it every year. You can review the information in your organization's profile now and update it as necessary.
- Consortia and statewide applicants will have a complete list of their members, and service providers and consultants will have a complete list of their clients. Consortia can add members to their profiles if those members have not already done so themselves.
- Account administrators can create as many account users as they wish, and decide which activities the users can perform (*i.e.*, set their permissions or user rights). If you need additional people in your organization to file and certify forms and/or review and update information, you as the account administrator can add those users now.

Accounts

We have created accounts for school districts, library systems, independent schools, independent libraries, consortia and statewide applicants, and consultants that filed or appeared on FCC Forms 471 for FY2015. These organization accounts contain contact information for the organization.

- School district accounts also contain details on the individual schools that are part of the school district.
- Library system accounts also contain details on the individual library outlets/branches that are part of the library system.

Each organization account must have an account administrator. We started by assigning the authorized person on the FY2015 FCC Form 471 as the account administrator. The account administrator can create other users within the organization and assign them rights, update entity information, and also designate someone else to be the account administrator.

How to get more guidance

If you would like an introduction on how to use the portal – how to log in, create other users, associate a consultant with your account – we suggest that you watch the recorded webinar "Introduction to EPC" posted on the USAC website.

By clicking the graphic labeled "E-rate Productivity Center (EPC)" in the lower left-hand corner of any Schools and Libraries web page, you can access the EPC webpage. This webpage provides links to short instructional videos, user guides for applicants and service providers, a glossary of terms, and a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

If you are not sure whether USAC has set up an account and an account administrator for your organization, you can call the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at (888) 283-8100. CSB can answer questions and provide you with any additional assistance you may need.

FCC Form 470

Starting with FY2016, program forms will be filed in the portal. The FCC Form 470 for FY2016 is available – you can file it now if you are ready to do so by logging in to your portal.

You can get more information on filing the FCC Form 470 by clicking the following links:

- FCC Form 470 Filing Guide - a printable guide that walks through the entire form
- FCC Form 470 Video Series - five videos that cover the individual sections of the form

You can also view FCC Forms 470 that have already been filed for FY2016 in the portal, or you can view individual forms or download information on all filed forms from the Search Tools page on the USAC website.