SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES PROGRAM

NEWS BRIEF

October 14, 2016

> **TIP OF THE WEEK: Follow the guidance below if you are still working on the invoice process for FY2015 recurring services.** Be sure to ask for an invoice deadline extension if you have any doubt about your ability to complete the invoice process by the October 28 deadline.

Commitments for Funding Year 2016

Funding Year 2016. USAC is scheduled to release Funding Year (FY) 2016 Wave 17 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on October 17. This wave includes commitments for approved applications for all service types and at all discount levels. As of October 14, FY2016 commitments total over $693.7 million.

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

DEADLINE REMINDER for FY2015 Recurring Services and Invoice Deadline Extension Requests: October 28, 2016

October 28, 2016 is the deadline for most applicants and service providers for:

- Submitting invoices for FY2015 recurring services
- Requesting an invoice deadline extension to invoice for those services.

Below are some reminders and tips to get you through the invoice process successfully.

1. Request an invoice deadline extension NOW.

If you have not yet completed your invoicing for FY2015 recurring services, we strongly suggest that you request an invoice deadline extension. There is no penalty for requesting an extension and not using it. However, USAC cannot grant an extension after October 28, 2016.

Applicants and service providers should request an extension if one or more of the following apply:

- The applicant or service provider knows that the invoicing process cannot be completed by October 28.
- The applicant does not have a Personal Identification Number (PIN).
- The applicant does not have an approved 498 ID.
- The applicant or the service provider filed an invoice form on paper. Paper invoicing forms received after June 30, 2016 cannot be accepted.

How do I request an extension?

- Go to Submit a Question.
- On the Submit a Question page, click the "Continue" button.
- Choose "Invoice Deadline Extension Request" from the Topic Inquiry menu.
- Choose "Other" from the Specific Inquiry menu and click the "Continue" button.
- Fill in the required contact information. We suggest that you indicate that you are not submitting

attachments. Then click the "Continue" button.
- In the text box marked "Questions?", indicate that you are requesting an invoice deadline extension, and provide the funding request numbers (FRNs). You do not need to provide a reason or an explanation.
- When you are finished, click the "Submit" button.

2. Ask your service provider to file an FCC Form 473 (SPAC Form) for FY2016 online.

USAC cannot pay invoices – from either the applicant or the service provider – until an FCC Form 473 is on file for the specific funding year referenced on the invoices.

NOTE: Some service providers have filed SPAC Forms on paper. USAC was unable to process paper SPAC Forms for previous funding years once the online SPAC Form became available in the E-File System, and USAC could not process ANY paper SPAC Forms for FY2016.

How do I know if my service provider has filed this form?

- Go to the Search for SPIN Information tool.
- Enter at least three letters of the service provider's name followed by a percent sign (%) or enter the Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN), and click the "Next" button.
- Locate the appropriate SPIN (if there is more than one search result).
- In the far right-hand column, look for "2015." If 2015 appears, the service provider has successfully filed the form.

NOTE: If your service provider has not filed the SPAC Form as the invoice deadline approaches, go ahead and file the BEAR. You may encounter a warning message (e.g., the service provider has not yet filed a SPAC Form), but you should proceed and submit the invoice. Remember that USAC considers an invoice submitted on the day it is filed, regardless of whether the service provider has completed its certifications.

3. Make sure USAC has approved your FCC Form 498 if you intend to file BEAR Forms.

To complete and certify an FCC Form 498 for applicants:

- The School or Library Official or the General Financial Contact must complete the FCC Form 498.
- The School or Library Official must certify the form.
- The applicant must submit verification to USAC of the bank account referenced on the FCC Form 498.
- USAC must review and approve the data on the form and the bank account documentation.
- After USAC has approved the form, the 498 ID will appear in the dropdown field at the top of the online BEAR Form.

How can I tell if USAC has approved my FCC Form 498?

- Go to the Search for 498 ID Status tool. The 498 IDs are in numerical order. It may take some time to load in your browser.
  - To search by 498 ID, scroll down the list to the appropriate number. If you cannot scroll, switch to a different browser or copy the entire table (see below).
  - To search by Billed Entity Number (BEN), use your browser's Find command (Ctrl+F) to type in the BEN(s) you are looking for.
  - To search for a large number of BENs, you can copy the entire table by clicking in the table, selecting all (Ctrl+A), copying the result (Ctrl+C), opening a spreadsheet program, and pasting your results (Ctrl+V) in the first cell of a blank spreadsheet.
- Find the status. The statuses are Certified (submitted and certified by the applicant), Rejected (errors in the data or the documentation), or Approved (data and documentation reviewed and verified).

What are the most common reasons FCC Form 498 forms are rejected?

- **Federal EIN mismatch.** The Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Tax ID Number you provided when you registered for your Federal Communications Commission Registration Number (FCC RN) does not match the number you provide on your FCC Form 498. If it does not, you will have to correct the incorrect number before USAC can process your form.
  - TIP: Go to the Search Public Information page of the CORES website and search for your EIN (choose "EIN" from the dropdown menu, enter your EIN or Tax ID Number, and click

the "SEARCH" button. If you have an FCC RN but your search returns no results, you can call the FCC at (877) 480-3201 or email their helpdesk and ask that your EIN or Tax ID be associated with your FCC RN.

- **Account/routing number entries reversed.** You entered your bank account information in the wrong fields. Enter your bank routing number in the field marked "ACH Financial Institution Transit Number" and your bank account number in the field marked "Financial Institution Account Number for ACH."
- **Account verification documentation missing or non-standard.** When USAC reviews your FCC Form 498 and asks for documentation of your bank account information, upload a voided check or bank statement to our secure website. If you do not have either of these, call us at (888) 641-8722, choose option 5 (FCC Form 498), and ask us about permissible alternative documentation.

Will USAC tell me if there is a problem with my FCC Form 498 or documentation?

Yes. USAC sends emails at least once a week to everyone with a certified, but not yet approved, FCC Form 498 and gives the specific problems with the form(s). Review the information provided in the email, make any necessary corrections, and re-certify the form.

Do I have to wait for an email from USAC to submit my documentation?

No. You can upload your documentation to our secure website immediately after you certify your FCC Form 498.

What if I still have questions?

Have your 498 ID ready (the nine-digit number after your form nickname which starts with "#443-") and call us at (888) 641-8722, option 5.

Please note: While the Client Service Bureau (CSB), telephone 888-203-8100, can answer general questions about the FCC Form 498, you should call USAC directly at the 888-641-8722 telephone number for questions on the FCC Form 498. CSB does not have access to the FCC Form 498 approval process and cannot answer specific questions about the data or documentation associated with your form.

4. Request a PIN if you do not have one.

Call CSB at 888-203-8100 to request a PIN. We are creating PINs as requests come in and, through October 28, we are sending PINs by email to applicants multiple times a week.

Last Week in "File Along with Me":

- "File Along with Me" is a blog that covers the E-rate Program application process step-by-step, and serves as a schedule you can follow to manage your application. Ready to join us? Read the Blog

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