August 18, 2017

> **TIP OF THE WEEK: After you certify an FCC Form 498, please respond promptly to requests from USAC for documents and/or information.** We cannot approve your form until we have been able to verify that the information you provided in certain fields is correct and complete (see below).

Commitments for Funding Years 2017 and 2016

Funding Year 2017. USAC released Funding Year (FY) 2017 Wave 12 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) earlier today. As of August 18, FY2017 commitments total over $880 million.

Funding Year 2016. USAC released Wave 59 FCDLs on August 15. As of August 18, FY2016 commitments total over $2.9 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).

USAC's FCC Form 498 Review Process

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 each FCC Form 498 before the applicant can receive a 498 ID. The 498 ID will then be featured on each BEAR Form submitted by the applicant.

In last week's SL News Brief, we provided a summary of the information you need to have on hand to complete your FCC Form 498 and a description of the filing process. This week we will cover USAC's FCC Form 498 review process.

USAC's review process includes verification of the following information:

- Banking account number
- Routing number
- FCC Registration Number (FCC RN)
- D-U-N-S Number
- Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Tax Identification Number (Tax ID)

We will ask you to submit documentation for your bank account. We review that documentation and attempt to verify some of the other information you provided on your form.

- If the information matches, we can approve your form.
- If the information does not match or is not consistent, this can delay our processing of your form or cause your form to be rejected.

Bank account number and routing number

After you certify your form, we encourage you to scan and upload a copy of a voided check or a

statement from your financial institution that includes your bank name and bank account number. The name on the account must match the name on the FCC Form 498, and the bank account information must match the information on the voided check or bank statement.

You can upload your documentation or fax it to us.

- To upload your documentation, complete the information requested on the Upload Documents page, locate and upload your documentation using the **Browse…** or **Choose File** function on that page, and then click the **Send** button.
- To fax your documentation:
  - Create a cover page that features your billed entity name, your 498 ID (from your certified FCC Form 498), and the contact person's name, phone number, and email.
  - Fax the cover page and your documentation to us at (888) 637-6226.

If you do not have a voided check or bank statement that meets these requirements – for example, if reimbursements must be deposited with another entity, such as a town or county government – contact USAC Customer Support. We can help you identify acceptable documentation that will meet our requirements or provide you with other assistance.

To contact USAC Customer Support:

- Call (888) 641-8722 between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM ET Monday through Friday.
- For now, choose the following menu options in this order:
  - Option 3 (assistance with the Schools and Libraries Program)
  - Then Option 2 (service provider needing assistance)
  - Then Option 2 (disbursement status and FCC Form 498 assistance)
- We are working to make our phone menus shorter and more intuitive, and we will inform you of any changes when that effort has been completed. For now, please follow the options as they are listed above.
- You can also email USAC Customer Support.

If we are ready to start our review and have not yet received your documentation, we will send an email requesting the documentation with a link to the Upload Documents page.

FCC RN and Federal EIN or Tax ID

Our system will also verify that the EIN or Tax ID you report on the FCC Form 498 matches the number you reported on your FCC RN on file with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). We will notify you if there is a mismatch. The mismatch must be corrected before we can process your form.

If we notify you that your FCC RN does not appear to match the entity filing the FCC Form 498, you need to verify that you have entered the correct FCC RN. You can use the Search Public Information section of the CORES website to search for the correct FCC RN using your EIN or Tax ID, business name, or last name.

To modify your FCC RN, you may need to modify both your organization's profile and your FCC Form 498.

To modify your organization's profile:

- Log in to your EPC account.
- From your landing page, click the organization main page.
- Click **Manage Organization**.
- You can now edit the FCC RN in your organization's profile.
- Click **Submit** to save your information.

After you update the profile information, you can modify your FCC Form 498.

- Click the **Records** tab at the top of the page.
- Choose **FCC Form 498** from the list of entries. You must have School or Library Official or General Financial Contact rights assigned to you by your account administrator in EPC to be able to access and modify the form.
- Click the nickname of the form you want to modify.
- Click the **Modify FCC Form 498** button at the top of the form.
- Navigate to the third page of the form using the **Save and Continue** button.

Under the **Organization Number**, update the FCC RN.
- Click **Save and Continue** until you have submitted your form.
- Re-certify your form. You must have School or Library Official rights to be able to certify the form.

How to ensure that entities who have changed status can still submit BEAR Forms

In the transition from our legacy system to EPC, the status of some entities changed. For example, a school district that used the entity number of its administration building to file program forms in the legacy system may have created a new entity number for the school district in EPC. In this and other similar cases, the entity number of the previous year applicant (in our example, the administration building entity number) cannot file BEAR Forms for FY2015 and previous funding years.

To remedy this, a billed entity (independent school, independent library, school district, library system, or consortium) filing or updating an FCC Form 498 should proceed as follows:

- Go to the **Associated BENs** section of the form.
- Add the entity numbers – one at a time – of any entities that will be filing BEAR Forms for your entity for FY2015 and previous funding years.
- After you enter each entity number, check to make sure that the entity name that appears in the **Billed Entity Name** field is the correct entity.
- Remember that USAC will use the banking information on this FCC Form 498 to deposit payments. If one or more of the entities that will be filing BEAR Forms wants its deposit to go to a different bank account, you must file a separate FCC Form 498 that features that entity as an associated BEN and provides that entity's banking information in order for the payment to be deposited in the correct bank account.

Remember that you must re-certify your FCC Form 498 after you make any modification or change.

Notification of successful review

When we have completed our review of your documentation, we will approve your FCC Form 498 and send an email to the General Financial Contact. These email notifications are sent in batches once or twice a week.

Because the notifications are not sent every day, the applicant may be unable to start a BEAR Form until the day following the email, or the applicant may be able to complete a BEAR Form a day or two before the email arrives. In either case, if the 498 ID appears on the BEAR Form, the FCC Form 498 has been approved and the applicant can complete and certify the BEAR Form.

Common problems

Here are the most common reasons for processing delays:

- **The bank routing number and the bank account number are transposed.** While the bank routing number appears first on a check, the applicant enters the bank account number first on the FCC Form 498.
- **The applicant modified the FCC Form 498 and did not re-certify it.** Every time an applicant updates an entry or makes any other change on a certified FCC Form 498, the form must be re-certified, or its status will show as "In Progress" and the applicant cannot file BEAR Forms with the updated information. If you make changes and re-certify the form, be sure to email FinOps-Processing@usac.org and let us know that the form is ready for our review. We will then send you an email after we have re-approved your form.
- **USAC has not received the requested supporting documentation.** If you have submitted your documentation and do not receive a response from USAC after three days, you can email FinOps-Processing@usac.org to check on the status.
- **The information you have provided is not consistent with the information on your FCC RN.** We will provide you with an explanation if we reject your form. If you need help, contact USAC Customer Support as described above.

For more information

For all questions about FCC Forms 498 that have been certified – for example, questions about the status of your form, our review process, our receipt of your submitted documentation, examples of alternative banking documentation, or form re-certification – you can contact USAC Customer Support as described above.

If you have general questions or need assistance filing an FCC Form 498, you can contact the Schools and Libraries Program Client Service Bureau by opening a customer service case in EPC or by calling us at (888) 203-8100.