# Invoicing

E-rate Program Participant Webinar

December 16, 2020
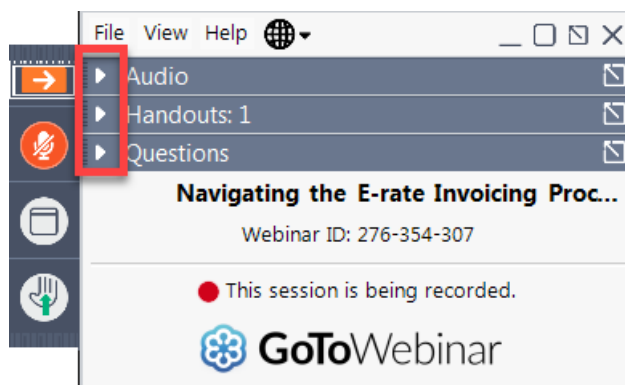
**Universal Service**
Administrative Co.

# HOUSEKEEPING – WEBINAR PANEL

- The webinar panel is located on the right-hand side of the screen.
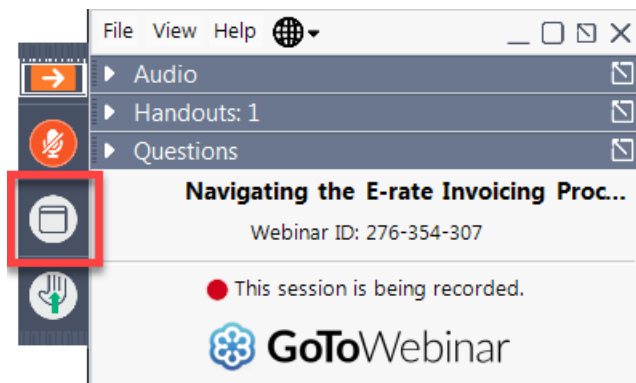
- Open the panel by clicking the orange arrow.

- Use the white arrows to open the sections in the panel.

# HOUSEKEEPING – WEBINAR PANEL

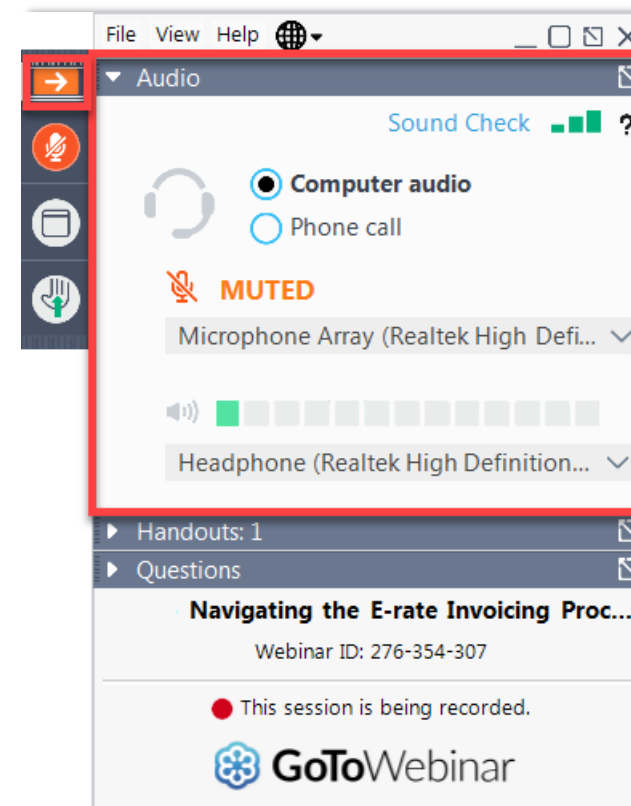- You can use the panel to view the presentation in full screen or window mode.

- We are not using the hand raise function.
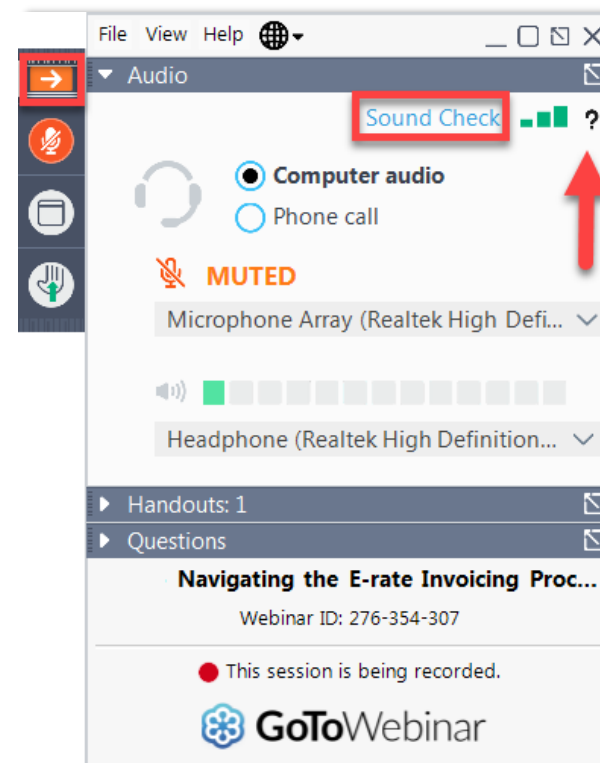
# HOUSEKEEPING – AUDIO

- Use the "Audio" section of your control panel to select an audio source.

- Choose one of the audio options:
  - Your computer's audio
  - Call in using an access code and audio PIN.

- The audience will remain on mute.

# HOUSEKEEPING – TECHNICAL ISSUES

- Use the "Sound Check" link and click question mark icon for audio help.

- Exit webinar and click the check system requirements link in the event confirmation email to determine whether your computer meets the requirements to see and hear the webinar.

- If issues persist, call 833-851-8340 to troubleshoot with GoToWebinar.

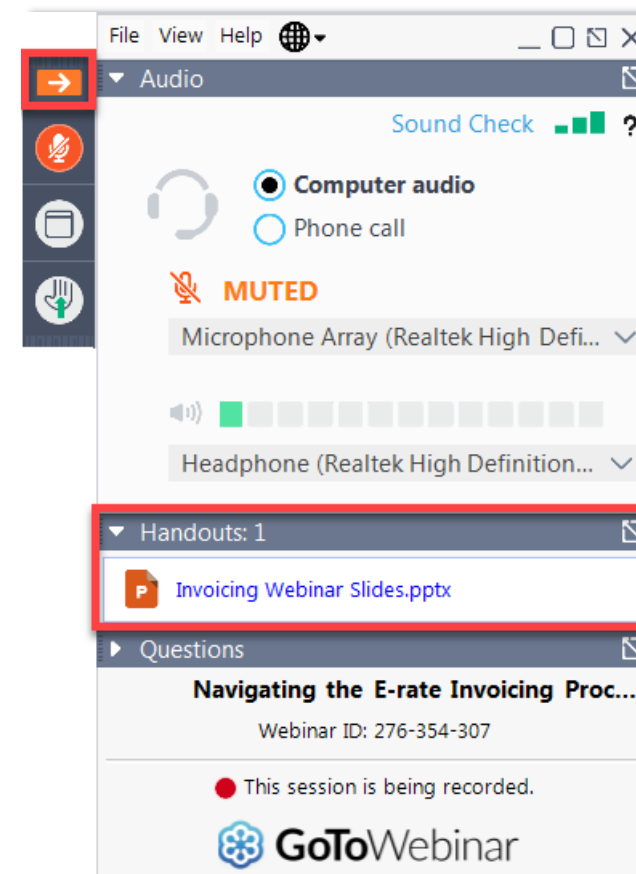Computer Audio
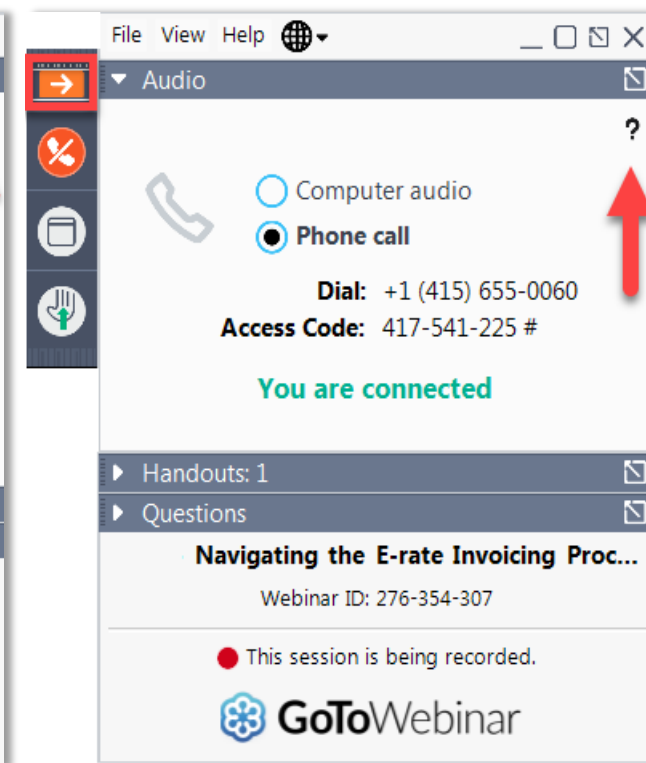
Phone Call

# HOUSEKEEPING – RESOURCES

- The **slide deck** is available when you click the arrow to expand the "**Handouts**" tab.

- A recording of this webinar will be available after the event via the registration link.

# HOUSEKEEPING – Q&A

- **There will be a live Q&A session focused on today's topics.**

- Tips for submitting questions:

  - Use the "Questions" box in your webinar control panel anytime during the presentation.

  - Click the box with the arrow above the questions box to expand it and see all written answers.

  - Write in full sentences.

  - Ask one question at a time.

  - Ask questions related to webinar content.

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**Call us at (888) 203-8100**

Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET

**Create a customer service case in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC):**

1. Log in to EPC.
2. Select the **Contact Us** link from the upper right menu on your landing page.

# MEET OUR TEAM



## Pamela Lloyd
### Senior Manager

E-rate Program



## Nkeshi Free
### Communications Specialist

E-rate Program

## AGENDA

1. Preparing to Invoice

2. Invoicing Methods

3. Before You Begin

4. Filing an FCC Form 498 (Applicants)

5. When to File an Invoice

6. Invoice Review

7. Case Studies

# **Preparing to Invoice**

# Preparing to Invoice

- Receive a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL)

- **Applicant** certifies FCC Form 486 Receipt of Service Confirmation and Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Certification Form

  - USAC approval required for FCC Form 486

- **Service Provider** certifies an FCC Form 473 Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC Form)

  - Required for each Service Provider Invoice Number (SPIN) each year

# Invoicing Methods

# Invoicing Methods

There are two methods to invoice USAC:

| 1 | 2 |
|:---:|:---:|
| **Applicant files:** | **Service Provider files:** |
| **FCC Form 472** | **FCC Form 474** |
| Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form | Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Form |

# Invoicing Methods

- **Applicant (472)**
  - File online

- **Service Provider (474)**
  - File online
  - File electronically via E-File

**NOTE:** All invoicing forms are now accessed through <u>One Portal</u>. Invoice submission by mail, email, fax or scan to USAC are not permitted.

# Invoicing Methods

**The invoicing method is chosen by the applicant.**

- Must be decided before certification of FCC Form 471 (Description of Services Ordered and Certification Form)

- Method is Funding Request Number (FRN) specific

- Non-reversible once the method is chosen

# Before You Begin

# Before You Begin

Verify that all the prerequisites are in place:

- FCDL – issued
- FCC Form 486 – certified and approved
- FCC Form 473 – certified

# Before You Begin

- The applicant decides their preferred invoicing method and communicates the decision to their service provider.

- Use the most recent FCDL or the Revised Funding Commitment Decision Letter (RFCDL) information

  - These letters include the following information to help you complete your invoice:

    - Discount rate

    - Approved cost of service

    - FCC Form 471 number

    - FRN

# Before You Begin

- Determine the invoice frequency:

  - E.g., monthly, bimonthly, quarterly, one-time, etc.

- Log in to One Portal account to access forms

  - Troubleshoot access (if needed)

- Watch walkthrough videos on the E-rate Videos page.

- Review the FCC Form 472 (BEAR Form) Filing Guide.

# Before You Begin - Filing BEAR Forms

If you are filing a BEAR, be sure you have:

- An approved FCC Form 498 (Service Provider and Billed Entity Identification Number and General Contact Information Form).

- An approved Personal Identification Number (PIN).

# How Do I Get a PIN?

1. Go to the [Personal Identification Number (PIN)](#) web page.

2. Upload the template (Excel format).

   - Enter one request per line.

   - PINs are specific to a person and to a billed entity.

3. Submit template in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) attached to a customer service case.

   - Title must include "PIN Request."

   - Upload spreadsheet to case.

# Common PIN Request Errors

**Please double-check template for errors before submitting.**

- Do not add or delete columns on the template.

- Eliminate any spaces before or after your entries.

- Check your spelling.

- Enter the request date using **M/D/YYYY** format.

- Provide two-letter state abbreviation (e.g. "NJ" for New Jersey).

- You can leave the **Street Address 2** and **Zip+4** fields blank.

**NOTE:** USAC sends PINs out once a week by email to the email address provided. If you need help, contact USAC's Client Service Bureau for assistance (888) 203-8100.

# Filing an FCC Form 498 (Applicants)
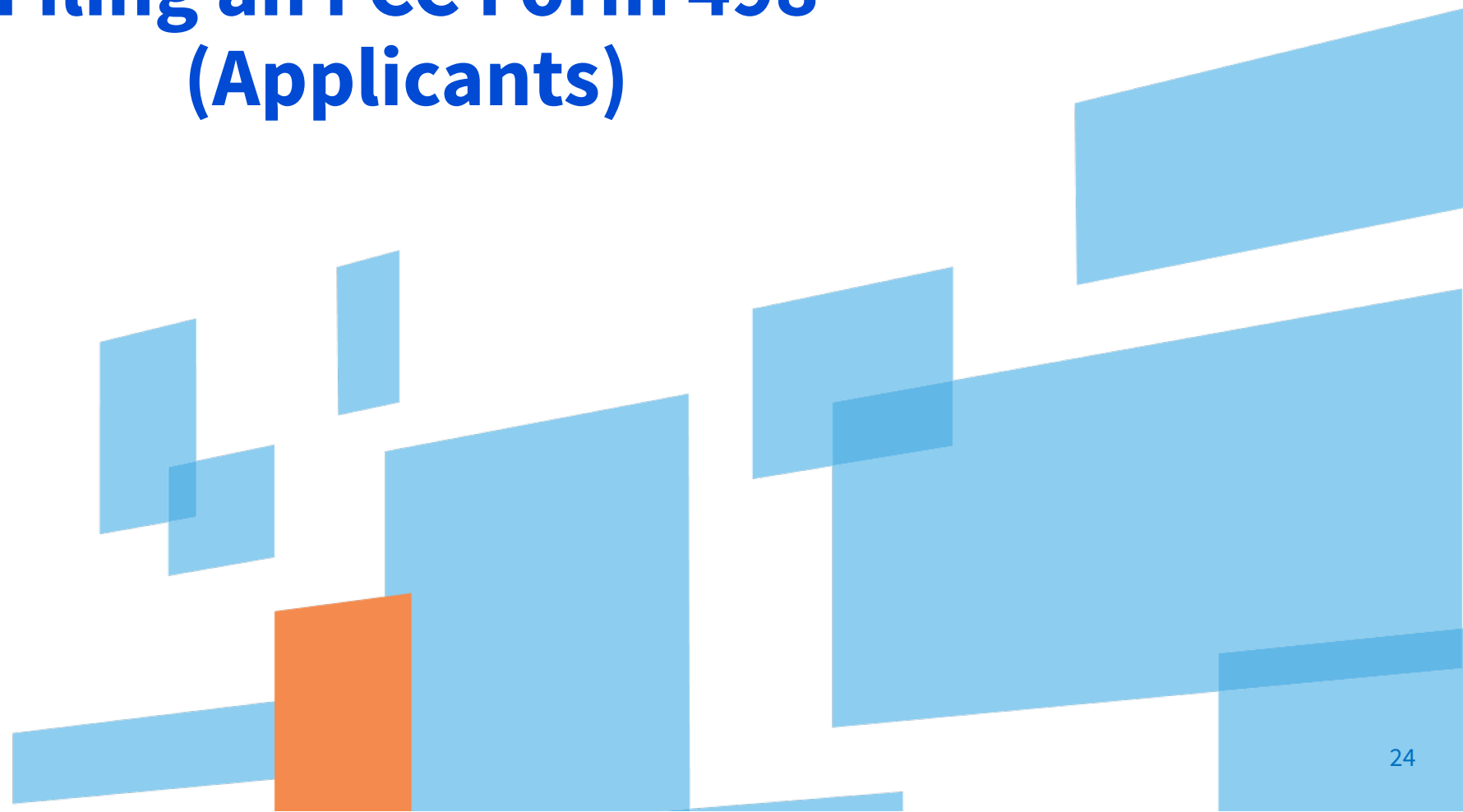
# FCC Form 498 for Applicants – How Do I File?

Filing an applicant FCC Form 498:

- **EPC landing page > Entity Profile > Related Actions > Create FCC Form 498**

- Only an **Official** from the school or library can perform all required actions (initiate, submit, modify, deactivate and certify)

- A **General Contact** can complete, but not certify the form.

**NOTE:** EPC may automatically copy the **General Contact** information into the **Remittance Contact** fields. If the **General Contact** and the **Remittance Contact** *are different*, remember to modify the entries in the **Remittance Contact** fields before you certify the form.

# FCC Form 498 for Applicants – How Do I File?

- Once the form is certified, you will receive an email from **498BankVerification@usac.org** with a link to upload requested banking information.

- USAC will verify your account information within two (2) business days, and the submitter will be notified of approval or rejection via email.

- To check the status of your form, call the Customer Support Center at 888-641-8722, option 3 (Schools and Libraries), then option 2 (FCC Form 498).

# FCC Form 498 for Applicants – How Do I File?

- What is considered acceptable banking information?
  - A blank voided check or a copy of the bank account statement.

- What if you don't control your own bank account?
  - We require a letter from the account owner (i.e., state/district/county office/school district) or financial institution to confirm the account information.

# FCC Form 498 for Applicants – When Do I File?

When to file an FCC Form 498:

- You need an applicant 498 ID.
- You need to update an existing FCC Form 498.
  - Add a new entity
  - Provide Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number
  - Update your banking information
- Existing FCC Forms 498 must include an entry in the **Business Type** field.

➢ Remember updates are not effective until the form is completed and certified by your School or Library Official.

**For help, email us at: [finops-processing@usac.org](mailto:finops-processing@usac.org)**

# FCC Form 498 for Applicants-Missing Applicant 498 ID Issues

Reasons why your applicant 498 ID may be missing when you log in to file your BEAR:

- Your School or Library Official has not certified the form.

- You've made recent changes to your FCC Form 498 or banking information, but your School or Library Official has not recertified the form.

- Your form contains typographical errors.

- Your form is missing banking information.

- Your applicant 498 ID is not associated with your BEN (Billed Entity Number).

# When to File an Invoice

# When to File an Invoice

The invoice deadline is 120 days after the last date to receive service or 120 days after the date of the FCC Form 486 Notification Letter, whichever is later.

- For example: The invoice deadline for Funding Year (FY) 2020 recurring services is Monday, October 28, 2021.
- If the deadline falls on a weekend or federal holiday, the deadline is extended to 11:59 p.m. ET on the following **business** day.

# When to File an Invoice

- File after services are delivered and paid.
  - For the BEAR, applicants pay service provider in full.
  - For the SPI, service providers bill applicant for their non-discount share first.

- You can choose the frequency.

**Important! File invoice on or before the invoice deadline**

- Generally, October 28 for recurring services.
- Generally, January 28 for non-recurring services.

# How to File a Deadline Extension FY2016 and Later

- **Applicants** locate their billed entity record under:
  - Organization landing page
  - Billed Entity profile page
  - Related Actions
  - Invoice Deadline Date Extension Requests

- **Service providers** locate their SPIN under:
  - Records
  - Service provider profile page
  - Related Actions
  - Invoice Deadline Date Extension Requests

# How to File a Deadline Extension for FY2015 and Previous Years

Applicants and service providers must log in to [One Portal](One Portal) to access invoice forms.

- **Applicants**
    - Log in to the BEAR Form with the PIN.
    - Access the link at the top of the BEAR Form.
- **Service providers**
    - Log in to the E-File System.
    - Choose the **472 BEAR Form** link.
    - Access the link at the top of the BEAR Form.

# When to File an Invoice Deadline Extension

- **Extension requests must be filed ON OR BEFORE the invoice deadline date (IDD)**.

- Filers are entitled to ***ONE 120-day extension*** for each FRN.

- If you miss the deadline to file an invoice or to request an invoice deadline extension, you must file a request for waiver of the invoice deadline with the FCC.

  - **NOTE:** The FCC must grant the waiver request before USAC can process an invoice.

- If USAC rejects a timely filed invoice, you can appeal that rejection directly to USAC.

# Relief Granted Under Order FCC 20-178

- Released December 10, 2020

- **Rule change** - Invoice deadline is 120 days from date of Revised Funding Commitment Decision Letter (RFCDL) approving a post-commitment request or granting an appeal of a previously denied or reduced funding request.

- **For FY2014 and later funding years** – FCC will review and, if appropriate, remand pending waiver requests for this issue and direct USAC to issue an RFCDL and provide 120 days to invoice.

  - Applicants and service providers who did not submit a waiver to the FCC will have 60 days from the day of the Federal Register publication of FCC 20-178 to do so.

# Invoice Review

# Invoice Review

USAC invoice review can involve two steps:

1. Automated Review
2. Manual Review

# Invoice Review - Automated

- All invoices undergo a series of automated reviews.
- If any of the below have an error or an inconsistency the system may reject your invoice:
  - FCC Form 471 number
  - Discount percentage
  - Available funding
  - FRN

# Invoice Review - Manual

The reviewers verify, among other things, that:

- The customer bills accurately reflect the invoiced amount.

- Discounts are properly applied.

- The services are eligible and were approved on the FCDL.

- If the services are not on the FCDL, USAC approved a service substitution.

# Invoice Review: Outreach

- The invoice reviewer conducts outreach to applicants and/or service providers.
- You have seven (7) days to respond, and you may request one (1) seven-day extension.
- USAC reviews the outreach response and makes a disbursement decision.
- If payment is rejected, the applicant or service provider can re-submit the invoice once the issue has been corrected and if time remains to invoice.
  - If USAC rejects a timely filed invoice, the applicant or service provider has 60 days to appeal to USAC. If USAC denies the appeal, you have 60 days to appeal that rejection directly to the FCC.
  - Appeals must be filed timely, or they will be automatically denied.

# Invoice Review: Service Certification

- Some manual reviews require additional documentation, such as proof that:

  - The applicant paid their share.

  - The invoiced services were delivered and/or installed.

  - Progress payments were included in the contract.

- USAC reviewers send questions to the applicant or service provider, with response due by the "response requirement date."

- The applicant completes the certification and returns it directly to USAC.

  - Applicants, please be timely in your response.

- USAC reviews the information provided and makes a decision.

# Case Studies

# Case Studies: Similar Line Items

## First Invoice

Invoice #1237851
- Submitted 7/1/2020
- Invoice amount $842.00
- FRN 200047510
- Customer billed date of 7/1/2020

## Second Invoice

Invoice #1237895
- Submitted on 8/1/2020
- Invoice amount $842.00
- FRN 200047510
- Customer billed date of 7/1/2020

### Question:

How will USAC process the second invoice?

# Case Studies: Similar Line Items

**Answer:**

- USAC's system will flag the second invoice as a possible duplicate because **the start date and amount billed were the same on both invoices**. To resolve the matter, USAC will conduct an outreach.

- The invoice reviewer will request documentation to support both invoices and to demonstrate that the second is not a duplicate.

**To avoid this problem:**

- The date on each line item should be the date service started **for that line item**. The second invoice should have had a customer billed date of 8/1/2020.

# Case Studies: Customer Bill

- Applicant submits a BEAR requesting $1,600.00 reimbursement for Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC).
- The service provider provides this customer bill.

**INVOICE**

LMN Service Provider
123 Main Street
Tacoma, Washington 98444

Little Red School
12345 Gravelly Lake Drive
Lakewood, Washington 98409

Basic maintenance          $2,000.00

**Question:** What information is missing from the customer bill?

# Case Studies: Customer Bill

## Answer:

The bill should include the following:

- A description of the work performed

- Equipment repaired or replaced

  - Hours worked, date(s) and time(s)

**To avoid this problem:**

- Request detailed bill from service provider

- Approved discount

- Reconciliation between customer bill and the requested reimbursement

**INVOICE**

LMN Service Provider

123 Main Street

Tacoma, Washington 98444

Little Red School

12345 Gravelly Lake Drive

Lakewood, Washington 98409

Basic Maintenance          $2,000.00

**Description:**

- Two hours of onsite maintenance
- Performed on August 21$^{st}$ 2019
- On product APC SMART-UPS 3000VA RM 2U LCD

# Case Studies: Services Not Approved on FRN

- Applicant submits an invoice for FRN 190001100 which was approved for BMIC services.

- The invoice reviewer requests a copy of the customer bill from the applicant. The applicant sends the invoice reviewer a customer bill for Internal Connections.

**Question:** What will USAC do?

# Case Studies: Services Not Approved on FRN

## Answer:

- Invoice will be denied due to incorrect service type.

**To avoid this problem:**

- Invoice for Internal Connections using appropriate FRN.

- Accurate customer bill

  - If you have time, re-submit the invoice and provide the correct supporting documentation.

- If services are BMIC but are listed on the FCC Form 471 as Internal Connections, you or the service provider can file an appeal to correct the service type on the FRN.

# Case Studies: Service Certification

- USAC receives an invoice for a router which includes installation.

- The invoice reviewer sends a service certification to the service provider to verify that the router was delivered and installed. The service provider forwards the entire message to the applicant.

- The applicant completes the service certification and returns it to the service provider, who forwards it to USAC.

**Question:** What will USAC do?

# Case Studies: Service Certification

**Answer:**

- Service certification must come directly from the applicant. The reviewer will reach out to the applicant to verify that the applicant completed the certification.

  - If there is no response within seven days, the invoice will be rejected.

**To avoid this problem:**

- The applicant should send the service certification directly to USAC.

  - The service provider may want to follow up with the applicant to make sure the applicant has followed USAC's instructions.

# Case Studies: Entity Verification

- USAC receives an invoice with several addresses listed on the invoice.

- Some of the addresses are not listed as eligible recipients of service on the FCC Form 471.

**Question:** What will USAC do?

# Case Studies: Entity Verification

**Answer:**

- All entities receiving the services must be approved on the FCC Form 471.

- Services provided to any unapproved entities will not receive reimbursement.

**To avoid this problem:**

- Ensure all entities receiving services are submitted with your FCC Form 471.

- Carefully read reviewer's outreach email, and clearly state if a location is an annex, a meet point, or a cross connect.

# Case Studies: Large Bill & Requested Payment

- In response to an outreach, USAC receives documentation with 20+ pages of bills along with the requested payment without identification of the actual lines requiring payment.

**Question:** What will USAC do?

# Case Studies: Large Bill & Requested Payment

## Answer:

- All invoice lines are investigated to determine eligibility for payment.

**To avoid this problem:**

- Identify lines in larger bills using indicators to help the reviewer process invoices timely.
  - Invoices lacking an indicator increases review time.

**Examples of indicators:**

- Highlight the line
- Star the line
- Use the worksheet

# Case Studies: Equipment List

- USAC receives an invoice for equipment, but without a full list of equipment and/or manufacturer part numbers.

**Question:** What will USAC do?

# Case Studies: Equipment List

**Answer:**
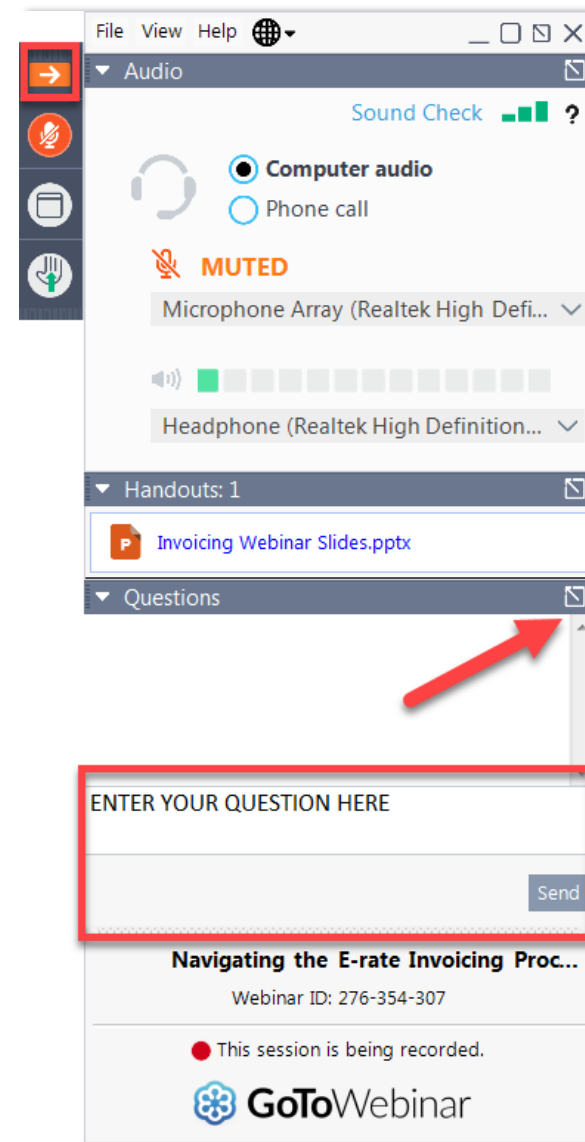
- The reviewer will research the equipment's eligibility.

**To avoid this problem:**

- Provide a list that identifies the equipment and manufacturer part numbers so that the reviewer can proceed with the invoice review without delay.

## HOUSEKEEPING – Q&A

- **Review for the Q&A session**
- Tips for submitting questions:
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# Q&A SESSION

SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS DURING THE LIVE WEBINAR

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# Thank You!

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