

Guide for New Online BEAR

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The SLD has released the Online BEAR (Form 472) system and I encourage you to use it. The new system will eliminate faxing BEARs, will enable applicants to receive their reimbursement checks faster, and provides the functionality to track pending or previously submitted BEARs. Below are step-by-step instructions for completing the Form.

Important: To submit a BEAR Form online, applicants will need their PIN, AND their service provider must have a USAC User ID and Password. If a vendor is not prepared to accept Online BEARs, the applicant must file a paper BEAR.

1) Log-in to the Online BEAR System at: <https://www2.sl.universalservice.org/bear/login.aspx> using your Billed Entity Number (BEN), PIN, email address, and the last name of the PIN user. (If the system says it's an invalid e-mail address, try typing it in CAPS, or try using the last name of the contact person.) Unlike all other SLD forms, the Online BEAR requires you to log-in using your PIN instead of certifying the form after it's been submitted.

2) Click on "New BEAR Form" to start a new BEAR. (If you ever want to track a BEAR that's been submitted (even previously submitted paper-submitted BEARs) or is pending, instead click on "Track Form" and enter the query information.)

3) When the blank BEAR Form appears, you'll see it looks nearly identical to the paper BEAR except it is just 1 page.

3: Enter the SPIN for this BEAR (remember a BEAR can only be associated with 1 SPIN)

6: Enter a Form Identifier -- one that you make up (AT&T FY 06, for example)

9: Enter the Form 471 Number

10: Enter the FRN Number

12 (Use for recurring services and skip # 13): The date for # 12 should be the date of the first bill that you received from the service provider for the reimbursements being requested on this BEAR. For example, if you are filing for 12 months worth of bills, your first bill likely was 7/1/2006 or some date in July 2006. If you are only filing for reimbursement on bills from January 2007 - June 2007, your bill date would likely be 1/1/2007 or some date in January 2007.

13: (Use for non-recurring services and skip # 12): The date in # 13 should be either the date that the products were shipped, the last date that the service provider performed its work, or the vendor bill date.

#14: Enter the eligible pre-discount amount spent for this FRN. The Online system will then automatically multiply the amount in # 14 by your approved discount and that product will then be entered in #15. (See ** at bottom of this message for instructions on what to enter if you spent more or less than the amount you were originally committed by the SLD.)

Note: If you have more than 1 FRN for this SPIN, you may click "Add Line Item" at the bottom of Block 2 to enter the new FRN information on the same BEAR.

Block 3 Certification:

A, B, C, D: Check the box to the left of each certification.

16: Check the signature box.

18 - 21: Enter the authorized person's contact information and name of employer.

4) -- NEW -- At the bottom of the page is a text box where you can include any message you have for your service provider -- including your billing account number(s) or other information requested by your service provider such as the # of months of service contained on the BEAR.

5) When you have reviewed and verified all of the information on the form, click the "Certify and Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Your service provider will automatically receive an email notification that your form is available to be reviewed and certified. USAC also will send you a copy of that notification.

6) If.....

... your service provider certifies your BEAR, you will receive an e-mail that the form has been vendor-certified and has been electronically sent to USAC for payment.

... your service provider does not certify your form within 7 days, USAC will send the service provider a reminder by email and a copy of the reminder to you.

... your service provider does not certify your form within 15 days, USAC will cancel your BEAR Form and send a notice of cancellation by email to both you and the service provider.

...your service provider denies your BEAR, you should contact them to find out the reason, and then resubmit a new BEAR.

...you entered more than one line item, and if your service provider does not certify all of them, you must file a new BEAR Form for the line(s) that were not certified. (Your service provider has the option of certifying the entire BEAR Form or just certifying certain lines on that form.)

Unfortunately, it's not possible to amend a submitted BEAR, or open a previously submitted or pending BEAR, and make revisions. You must file a new BEAR Form to request reimbursement.

7) After the service provider certifies the BEAR, it typically will take USAC 1-2 weeks to process it, and if it's approved, you'll receive a Form 472 Approval Letter and USAC will mail your reimbursement check to the service provider within 20 calendar days. The service provider then must mail you a check within 20 calendar days.

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I was committed more funding than I actually spent. Can I request reimbursement for the full amount that was originally committed?

Applicants should only seek reimbursement for the exact amount paid for the service instead of just listing the full funding cap (for example, if you were committed \$10,000, but then only spent \$6,000, you can only request E-rate reimbursements based on the \$6,000).

I spent more than what was committed on my funding commitment letter (my cap). What should I list on my BEAR -- the cap or the actual amount spent?

The SLD would like you to complete the BEAR with the actual figures of what you spent for the service, and not just list your funding cap amount. For example, if you spent \$10,000, and had a 50% discount, you would list \$10,000 in # 14 and \$5,000 in # 15, even if you were only committed \$4,000. The reason is that the SLD would like to show how much applicants are actually spending on services and also so they know that you are not just listing the funding commitment amount (the cap), but have actually added up how much was actually spent in each of the 12 months using the actual vendor bills. Unfortunately, they will only reimburse you up to the amount that you were committed.

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If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at erate@esc12.net

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