Universal Service Administrative Co.

Glossary of Terms

Use this USAC Glossary to find commonly-used terms and definitions.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
1ST DEMAND PAYMENT LETTER	E-Rate	The initial letter sent by USAC to recover funds from applicants or service providers that have been disbursed funds in violation of program rules or requirements. This letter comes after a COMAD or RIDF letter has been sent describing the reason for the recovery.
28-DAY WAITING PERIOD	E-Rate	The minimum time period an applicant is required to wait after posting the FCC Form 470 before entering into any contract with a service provider and submitting the FCC Form 471.
2ND DEMAND PAYMENT LETTER	E-Rate	A follow-up request for payment issued 31 days after the 1st Demand Payment Letter to the impacted party or parties who failed to take action to return funds disbursed in violation of program rules or requirements. As of the date of the second letter, recipients are placed on Red Light status. See also Red Light Rule and Red Light status.
497 OFFICER	Lifeline	A service provider officer responsible for filing and certifying Lifeline reimbursement claims. The 497 Officer is also responsible for creating and assigning an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) Administrator account in the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD).

Terms	Programs	Definitions
498 COMPANY OFFICER	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	The officer of a service provider company who is authorized to certify that data set forth in the FCC Form 498 is true, accurate, and complete. The 498 Company Officer has access to certify forms through USAC's E-File system and occupies a position specified in the company's corporate by-laws (or partnership agreement): typically, president, vice president of operations, vice president of finance, CFO, comptroller, treasurer, or a comparable position. If the reporting entity is a sole proprietorship, the owner must serve as the certifier.
498 ID/SERVICE PROVIDER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (SPIN)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A unique nine-digit number that USAC assigns to a service provider once that service provider has submitted the FCC Form 498 to USAC. Every service provider is required to have a 498 ID/SPIN to participate in any of the four universal service programs and receive payments from USAC. E-Rate program applicants who select the Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) invoicing process also need to complete an FCC Form 498 and will receive an applicant 498 ID.
499 COMPANY OFFICER	E-Rate, High Cost, Service Providers	The officer of a service provider company who is authorized to certify that data set forth in the FCC Forms 499-A/Q is true, accurate, and complete. The 499 Company Officer has access to certify forms through USAC's E-File system and occupies a position specified in the company's corporate by-laws (or partnership agreement): typically, president, vice president of operations, vice president of finance, CFO, comptroller, treasurer, or a comparable position. If the reporting entity is a sole proprietorship, the owner must serve as the certifier.
499 FILER ID	Service Providers	Six-digit identification number assigned to each entity filing the FCC Forms 499-A/Q. USAC automatically issues a company a new 499 Filer ID upon filing their first FCC Form 499-A.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
499 FILER ID DEACTIVATION REQUEST	Service Providers	Request that a company would make to USAC to deactivate a 499 Filer ID due to a company sale, merger, consolidation, bankruptcy, termination of business, or because the company no longer provides services that are subject to USF contributions. Those requesting a deactivation of their 499 Filer ID must also update their company information in the FCC CORES database. Visit USAC's Manage Your 499 ID page for additional information.
ACCESS RECOVERY CHARGE (ARC)	High Cost	A charge on customer bills that carriers use to recover part of the revenue lost to FCC-mandated reductions to switched access rates with reform of the intercarrier compensation system (the regulated payments among carriers to compensate each other for the origination, transport and termination of telecommunications traffic). More information is available on USAC's ICC Recovery page.
ACCOUNT ADMINISTRATOR	E-Rate	An EPC user who can manage users, permissions, and related entities for an organization such as a school, library, service provider, or consulting firm.
ACQUIRED EXCHANGE SUPPORT (AEX OR AES)	High Cost	The High Cost support paid to a carrier that acquires a telephone exchange eligible for funding from an unaffiliated carrier. Per-line support levels remain the same following the transfer of ownership.
ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY	E-Rate	The relevant authority with responsibility for administration of the eligible school or library who must certify the status of the entity's compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) in order to receive universal service support.
ADMINISTRATOR'S DECISION LETTER (ADL)	Lifeline	See Appeal Decision Letter.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM (ACP)	USAC General, Lifeline	An FCC program that made internet connectivity more affordable for eligible low-income households during the COVID-19 pandemic. The $14 billion program provided households with a monthly internet service discount and a one-time discount on internet-connected devices. The ACP, which supplanted the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP) in 2021, ended in June 2024 due to a lack of additional funding by Congress.
ALLOWABLE CONTRACT DATE (ACD)	E-Rate	The earliest date on which an E-Rate applicant can sign a contract for contracted services or enter into an arrangement for tariffed or month-to-month services with a service provider. It is calculated as at least 28 days or four weeks after the FCC Form 470 is certified.
ALLOWABLE CONTRACT SELECTION DATE (ACSD)	Rural Health Care	The earliest date on which an RHC applicant may enter into a service agreement with a service provider. This date must fall at least 28 calendar days after the applicant posts the FCC Form 461 or 465 to USAC's website.
ALTERNATIVE DISCOUNT MECHANISMS	E-Rate	An alternative method for schools that choose not to use NSLP participation numbers to calculate their E-Rate program discounts. Federally approved alternative discount mechanisms cannot be less stringent than the same measure of poverty established for the NSLP. See also National School Lunch Program.
ANNUAL A/Q TRUE-UP	Service Providers	A reconciliation between a service provider's actual end-user revenue (as reported annually by April 1 on the FCC Form 499-A) and earlier projections from the provider's FCC Forms 499-Q. USAC conducts the annual true-up each July.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
APPEAL	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A request to reconsider a USAC decision. Any party that wishes to appeal must first do so with USAC before filing an appeal with the FCC. Once USAC has made a decision on an appeal, the party may appeal USAC's decision to the FCC. Parties seeking a waiver of FCC rules should file an appeal directly with the FCC because USAC cannot waive FCC rules. For more information, visit USAC's Appeals page.
APPEAL DECISION LETTER (ADL)	Rural Health Care	A formal letter USAC sends to an appellant explaining its appeal decision. If USAC makes a new decision to deny funding following an appeal, the appellant will have 60 days from the date of the decision letter to file an appeal with the FCC. For more information on filing FCC appeals, visit USAC's Appeals page.
APPEAL PACKET OF INFORMATION	Rural Health Care, Lifeline	The appeal and supporting documents submitted to USAC by the appellant.
APPEAL SUMMARY	Rural Health Care, Lifeline	A summary of the facts, logic and recommended decision about an appeal written by an Initial Reviewer at USAC. See also Initial Reviewer.
APPELLANT	Rural Health Care, Lifeline	The individual or entity filing an appeal of a USAC decision. To see where to send an appeal, visit USAC's Appeals page.
APPLICANT	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	The entity applying for universal service support. In the RHC and E-Rate programs, an applicant may be an individual organization or a consortium composed of multiple organizations.
APPROVED	Rural Health Care, Lifeline	The status that USAC designates to an FCC form that has been reviewed and found to be compliant with FCC program rules and/or USAC standards.
APPROVED SUPPORT FILE (ASF)	Rural Health Care	Confirmation of Universal Service (USF) funds to be disbursed to RHC applicants.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
AUDIT	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	An examination of documentation and resources that verify the state of compliance with program rules. USAC conducts audits through the Beneficiary and Contributor Audit (BCAP) and Supply Chain Audit Program (SCAP) programs in accordance with the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards.
AUTHORIZED USERS	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, High Cost, Service Providers	The employee(s) of a service provider company, established by the Company Officer or General Contact, authorized to enter and modify company information on FCC Forms 498 and 499 through the E-File application. For more information, visit USAC's Entitlements Guide.
AVERAGE SCHEDULE CARRIER	High Cost	The name given to NECA members that receive pool revenues or settlements for providing interstate telecommunications services. Revenues or settlements are calculated based on a series of FCC-approved statistical formulas that approximate the amounts that a similar cost company would receive.
BASIC MAINTENANCE OF INTERNAL CONNECTIONS (BMIC)	E-Rate	Services covering the repair and upkeep of eligible equipment inside a school of library (i.e., within the facility demarcation point). BMIC is a Category Two service type on the E-Rate program's Eligible Services List. See also Category Two Services.
BEAR NOTIFICATION LETTER	E-Rate	A letter USAC sends to an E-Rate applicant and their service provider after a Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement form (FCC Form 472) has been processed by USAC. The letter can be accessed from the EPC Newsfeed.
BENEFICIARY AND CONTRIBUTOR AUDIT PROGRAM (BCAP)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	An audit program through which USAC confirms program compliance and the amounts of recoverable funds among universal service beneficiaries and contributors. BCAP audits may be performed by USAC's internal audit staff or a firm under contract to USAC. For more details, visit USAC's BCAP webpage.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
BID	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	A response from a service provider (bidder) to a request for services. RHC and E-Rate program applicants request bids from service providers by posting their service needs to USAC's website for a minimum of 28 days.
BILLED ENTITY	E-Rate	The entity that receives the bill and pays for the supported service. A Billed Entity may be separate from the physical location receiving services.
BILLED ENTITY NUMBER (BEN)	E-Rate	A unique number assigned in EPC to each entity (school, library, school district, library system, or consortium) related to an application or associated funding requests. Whether the entity is a parent entity or a child entity associated to a parent BEN, each receives a distinctive billed entity number in EPC. For more information on creating, modifying, or cancelling a BEN, visit the E-Rate program's Entity Numbers page.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	USAC General	USAC's Board of Directors, whose 20 Board members represent USF beneficiaries, various types of service providers, community organizations, state regulators, low -income consumer advocates, a Tribal representative, and USACs CEO. The USAC Board oversees USAC's administration of the USF programs but does not make policy or interpret FCC rules.
BUDGET CONTROL MECHANISM	High Cost	A budgeting procedure that ensures that High Cost legacy support remains within an annual rate of return budget by reducing payments for carriers that participate in certain legacy funds. More information available here.
BUNDLED SERVICES COST ALLOCATION	E-Rate	The requirement that E-Rate program recipients cost-allocate non-ancillary ineligible components bundled with equipment or services eligible for E-Rate support (e.g., virtual private networks (VPNs) bundled with internet access.) See also Eligible Services List.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
CATEGORY ONE SERVICES	E-Rate	Services used to connect broadband or internet to eligible locations, or services that provide basic conduit access to the internet. Data transmission services and internet access are Category One services. See also Eligible Services List.
CATEGORY TWO BUDGET	E-Rate	The five-year maximum budget of E-Rate pre-discount funds that an applicant may receive for Category Two (C2) equipment and services within a school district, independent school, library system, or independent library. The C2 budget covers a 5-year budget cycle, with the current cycle running from FY2021-FY2025. The subsequent cycle will run from FY2026-FY2030. For additional details on C2 rules, visit the E-Rate program's Category Two Budgets page.
CATEGORY TWO SERVICES	E-Rate	Internal connections services needed to enable high-speed broadband connectivity and broadband internal connections components. Category Two includes local area networks/ wireless local area networks (LAN/ wireless LAN), internal connections components, basic maintenance of internal connections services, and managed internal broadband services. See also Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections, Managed Internal Broadband Services, and Eligible Services List.
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (CFO)	High Cost, Service Providers	Corporate officer responsible for financial operations. Service provider company CFOs may serve as official certifiers of the accuracy of forms submitted to USAC. See also 497 Company Officer, 498 Company Officer, and 499 Company Officer.
CHILDREN'S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT (CIPA)	E-Rate	A law that mandates certain internet safety and filtering requirements for recipients of E-Rate program discounts for services other than telecommunications services.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS (CFR)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	The general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by federal government agencies and executive branch departments. Telecommunications rules are located in Title 47 of the CFR. For specific language, see a digital version of the CFR.
COLLECTIONS TEAM	Rural Health Care, Lifeline	The team within USAC's Accounting department responsible for recovering funds.
COMMISSION	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A common abbreviation for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). See also FCC.
COMMITMENT ADJUSTMENT	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	The process by which a universal service funding commitment is reduced by USAC. See also COMAD Letter.
COMMITMENT ADJUSTMENT (COMAD) LETTER	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	Letter that USAC sends to a USF applicant whose funding commitment needs to be fully or partially adjusted (de-committed), including recovery of funds, if necessary. The letter explains the adjustment reason and amount and details whether universal service funds must be returned as a result of the adjustment. The letter also provides information on how to appeal the adjustment decision. Appeals must be received within 60 days of the date on the COMAD letter.
COMMON CARRIER	E-Rate, High Cost, Service Providers	An organization recognized by a regulatory authority (such as a state public utility commission) as providing telecommunications services to all requesting parties, or an organization that offers such services generally to the public for a fee.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP)	E-Rate	A mechanism for calculating schools' levels of need that E-Rate applicants may use as an alternative to annual determinations of eligibility for free and reduced-cost meals under the NSLP. Schools must have at least 25 percent of their students directly certified to qualify for the CEP. For more information on discount calculations in E-Rate, visit the program's Alternative Discount Mechanisms page. See also National School Lunch Program.
COMPANIES NEAR ME TOOL	Lifeline	A tool that allows consumers to find a list of participating Lifeline providers in their area using their zip code or city and state. Available at https://cnm.universalservice.org/.
COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	The process through which E-Rate and RHC applicants request bids for telecommunications and broadband services and equipment from service provider companies. USAC program rules stipulate that applicants to either program conduct a "fair and open" competitive procurement by posting bid requests to USAC's online portals for a minimum of 28 days.
COMPETITIVE ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER (CETC)	High Cost	A telecommunications carrier that is certified by a state's public utility commission or the FCC as eligible to receive High Cost support, but that is not the Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier, or ILEC (i.e. not the dominant local phone company).
COMPETITIVE LOCAL EXCHANGE CARRIER (CLEC)	High Cost	A category of telecommunications provider created by the 1996 Telecommunications Act to open the telecom marketplace to new entrants that would compete with the dominant local phone companies known as Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers, or ILECs.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
CONNECTED CARE PILOT PROGRAM (CCPP)	Rural Health Care	A three-year pilot program established by the FCC that ended on December 31, 2025. It provided up to $100 million of universal service support to help defray eligible HCPs' costs of providing connected care services and helped assess how USF funds could have been used to support connected care services. In selecting pilot projects from eligible HCPs, the FCC had a strong preference for pilot projects that primarily benefitted low-income Americans or veterans. CCPP provided an 85% subsidy to eligible projects for eligible services.
CONSOLIDATED POST AUDIT TRACKING SYSTEM (CPATS)	Rural Health Care, Lifeline	A central repository used by USAC's audit teams to administer workflows across divisions.
CONSORTIUM	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	A group of entities that apply together for universal service funding. In the E-Rate program, consortia can run competitive bid processes and/or apply for discounts on behalf of their members. In the RHC program, non-rural eligible HCPs may join consortia that are majority (50%+) rural but may not receive universal service support against their costs and expenses.
CONSULTANT	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	A company or individual (non-employee of the entity) selected to perform certain activities related to the application process on behalf of the applicant or service provider for a fee. A Letter of Agency (LOA) or consultant agreement must be in place before the consultant undertakes these activities.
CONSULTANT REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	A unique eight-digit identification number assigned by USAC to a consulting firm or individual consultant.
CONTRACT AWARD DATE (CAD)	E-Rate	The date a contract is awarded to a service provider. The CAD, which must be a minimum of 28 days after the day the applicant certifies their FCC Form 470, is needed to certify an FCC Form 471.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
CONTRACT EXPIRATION DATE (CED)	E-Rate	The date a contract ends between an applicant and service provider.
CONTRACT REVIEW	Rural Health Care	The process of reviewing a contract obtained through competitive bidding in the current funding year for an “evergreen” endorsement. Evergreen contracts allow HCPs to bypass competitive bidding for the life of the contract and up to five years of voluntary extensions. Applicants may request a contract review when they submit the contract with an FCC Form 462 or 466. Learn more about evergreen status on the RHC program’s Evergreen Contracts page.
CONTRIBUTOR	Service Providers	A telecommunications company that is required to make contributions to the USF based on the revenue it reports on the FCC Forms 499-A/Q. Companies that generate some or all of their revenue from interstate or international voice service, and that meet minimum revenue thresholds, are obligated to contribute to the USF.
CORRECTIVE SPIN CHANGE	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	A change to the SPIN featured on one or more FRNs that corrects a data entry error, reflects a merger or acquisition, or fixes some other type of error. It is not the result of a change to the actual service provider by the applicant.
COST COMPANY	High Cost	A carrier participating in a High Cost legacy fund that calculates support based on carrier costs.
COVID-19 TELEHEALTH PROGRAM	Rural Health Care	A program that provided funding to eligible HCPs to support the telecommunications services, information services, and connected devices needed to provide critical connected care during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program, established in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, was administered by USAC but was not a USF program. The final deadline for submitting invoices for reimbursement was October 31, 2023.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
CREDIT BALANCE REFUND	Service Providers	A disbursement made to a USF contributor that overpaid USAC.
DATA COLLECTION AGENT (DCA)	Service Providers	A term describing USAC's role as the FCC's agent responsible for the administration, processing, filing, and distribution of carrier revenue data for the Telecommunications Relay Services fund, which compensates TRS providers for the costs of providing interstate telephone transmission services to those with hearing or speech disabilities; the cost recovery mechanisms for numbering administration and local number portability; and the universal service programs.
DATA TRANSMISSION SERVICES AND/OR INTERNET ACCESS	E-Rate	A Category One service type on the Eligible Services List that includes broadband connectivity and basic conduit access to the internet but does not include charges for content, equipment purchases, or other services beyond basic conduit access to the internet. This service type also covers lit or dark fiber and self-provisioned broadband networks. See also Category One Services.
DE MINIMIS EXCEPTION	Service Providers	A status for which a service provider qualifies for a given calendar year when the revenue reported on its corresponding FCC Form 499-A is such that the calculated annual contribution to the USF is less than $10,000. Service providers that are de minimis are still required to file FCC Form 499-A by April 1 each year, but are not obligated to file the quarterly FCC Form 499-Q.
DE-COMMITMENT AND DE-OBLIGATION	Rural Health Care	Terms referring to USF monies that are recovered from an applicant or redirected. The two terms may be used interchangeably. In the RHC program, funds will be de-obligated 60 days after the invoice filing deadline.
DEBT COLLECTION IMPROVEMENT ACT (DCIA)	Service Providers	A law that requires federal agencies to transfer delinquent debts or claims to the Secretary of the Treasury for further collection action. Unpaid obligations to the USF more than 90 days past due are transferred to the Treasury for collection and enforcement.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
DELINQUENCY NOTICES	Service Providers	Monthly letters that companies receive if they have fallen behind on payments owed to the USF. USAC may send more than one notice in one month if the contributor is behind on more than one invoice.
DELINQUENT DEBT	Service Providers	Any portion of an amount owed to the USF that is not paid by the stated due date. Amounts remaining unpaid 30 days after the due date are subject to interest at an annual rate of prime plus 3.5 percent. Amounts remaining unpaid 90 days after the due date are subject to an additional penalty at an annual rate of 6 percent.
DEMAND PAYMENT LETTER (DPL) [LIFELINE]	Lifeline	A request for payment sent to an applicant or responsible party for outstanding ACP overpayments. The DPL notifies the applicant that the outstanding balance detailed in the letter must be paid in CORES within 30 days of the date of the DPL.
DEMAND PAYMENT LETTER (DPL) [RURAL HEALTH CARE]	Rural Health Care	A request for payment sent to an applicant or responsible party whose COMAD has not been appealed within 60 days of being sent a COMAD letter. The DPL notifies the applicant that the outstanding balance detailed in the COMAD letter must be returned within 30 days of the date of the DPL.
DEMARCATION POINT OR DEMARC	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	The point at which a service provider’s network ends and a customer’s local area network (LAN) begins.
DENIED	Rural Health Care, Lifeline	The status that USAC designates to an FCC form that has been reviewed and found not to be compliant with FCC program rules and/or USAC standards.
DETAILED AUDIT FINDING (FINDING OR DAF)	E-Rate, High Cost	A condition that shows evidence of non-compliance with the FCC rules that were in effect during the audit period. A finding or DAF provides background information and exception details following a USAC audit.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
DISCOUNT CALCULATIONS	E-Rate	The method the E-Rate program uses to determine discounts for schools, school districts, libraries, and library systems. E-Rate discounts are calculated using the percentage of students eligible for the NSLP (or an equivalent measure of poverty), the rural or urban status of the school district or library system, and the E-Rate discount matrix. See also National School Lunch Program and Urban/Rural Status.
DISTRICT WIDE DISCOUNT RATES	E-Rate	The policy that all USF funding requests for any school—or combination of schools within a school district—qualify for a single school-district-wide discount rate.
DOCUMENT RETENTION	E-Rate	The policy that E-Rate applicants and service providers must retain documentation related to the application for, receipt, and delivery of discounted services for at least 10 years from the last date of service delivery.
E-CERTIFICATION (E-CERT)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, High Cost, Service Providers	A process that allows universal service support applicants to certify and submit forms online, eliminating the need for paper copies of forms (and original signatures) and facilitating simpler record-keeping.
E-FILE	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, High Cost, Service Providers	USAC's online forms submission tool. Allows universal service support applicants, contributors, and service providers to register with USAC, submit forms, view invoices, add or remove authorized users, update account information, and more. Accessible at https://forms.universalservice.org/.
E-RATE PRODUCTIVITY CENTER (EPC)	E-Rate	The account and application management portal for the E-Rate program. E-Rate program participants use this tool to manage program processes, receive notifications, create and submit invoices, and contact customer service.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
E-RATE PROGRAM	E-Rate	One of the four universal service programs administered by USAC. Formally known as the Schools and Libraries Program, the program provides discounts to schools and libraries for eligible equipment and services.
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY (ESA)	E-Rate	A regional public multiservice agency authorized by state statute to develop, manage, and provide services or programs to local educational agencies.
ELIGIBLE ENTITY	E-Rate	An entity that meets the requirements for eligibility to participate in the E-Rate program.
ELIGIBLE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER	Rural Health Care	An HCP that meets the requirements for eligibility to participate in the RHC program. Visit USAC's Determine the Eligibility of Your Site page for more information.
ELIGIBLE SERVICES	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, High Cost, Service Providers	Equipment and services that are eligible for universal service support. In the E-Rate program, eligible services include data transmission services and/or internet access, internal connections, the maintenance of internal connections, and managed internal broadband services. In the High Cost program, eligible services include the costs of deploying rural voice service (legacy funds) or rural broadband service (modernized funds). In the RHC program, eligible services include broadband connectivity and telecommunications services.
ELIGIBLE SERVICES LIST (ESL)	E-Rate	An FCC-released annual list of the equipment and services eligible for reimbursement through E-Rate. Visit the program's Eligible Services List page to see current- and past-year ESLs.
ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER (ETC)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A designation given to telecommunications service providers by their state public utility commissions or the FCC, enabling them to participate in universal service programs.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER (ETC) ADMINISTRATOR	Lifeline	An NLAD user account type that is responsible for creating and managing subaccounts (these do not include the 497 Officer) for all users within their company. The ETC Administrator can perform subscriber transactions, query subscriber data, and view reports in NLAD. This account type also has access to the National Verifier to check consumer eligibility.
ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER (ETC) AGENT	Lifeline	A National Verifier user account type that can check consumer eligibility but does not have NLAD access.
ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER (ETC) ANALYST	Lifeline	An NLAD user account type that can perform subscriber transactions, query subscriber data, and view reports in NLAD. This account type also has access to the National Verifier to check consumer eligibility.
ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER (ETC) OPERATIONS	Lifeline	An NLAD user account type that can query subscriber data, submit resolution requests, and create and view reports. This account type also has access to the National Verifier to check consumer eligibility.
EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT PROGRAM (EBBP)	USAC General, Lifeline	A 2021 FCC program that provided eligible low-income households with a monthly internet service discount and a one-time connected-device discount. The $3.2 billion program, which aimed to help Americans stay connected to work, learning, and healthcare opportunities in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, was replaced by the larger Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).
EMERGENCY CONNECTIVITY FUND (ECF) PROGRAM	USAC General, E-Rate	An FCC initiative that helped eligible schools and libraries cover the costs of internet equipment and services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Introduced in 2021, the $7.171 billion program offered financial support for the purchase of laptops and tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers, and broadband connections to serve unmet needs for off-campus use by students, school staff, and library patrons. The ECF’s sunset date was June 30, 2024.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
ESTIMATION FACTOR	Service Providers	A percentage value provided in the FCC Form 499-A and FCC Form 499-Q instructions that help companies calculate possible future thresholds of contribution requirements and determine whether they are likely to be eligible for a de minimis exception.
EVALUATION	E-Rate	A mechanism for assessing and choosing a service provider from incoming bids. Note that the price of the eligible products and services must be included as a factor in the evaluation and that factor must be weighted more heavily than any other single factor.
EVERGREEN CONTRACT	Rural Health Care	A contract for service that does not need to be re-competed annually and whose only annual requirement is the filing of the FCC Form 462 (in the RHC program's HCF Program) or the FCC Form 466 (in RHC program's Telecom Program). Non-evergreen contracts are considered to have month-to-month status and require the annual posting of the FCC Form 461 or 465 (under the HCF and Telecom Programs, respectively) and the annual selection of the most cost-effective service based on a fair and open competitive bidding process. Learn more about the requirements for evergreen contracts on the RHC program's Evergreen Contracts page.
EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT	E-Rate	The 2015 law, 20 U.S.C. Section §7801, that provides the statutory definitions of elementary and secondary schools.
EVIDENCE FOR RURAL RATE	Rural Health Care	The requirement that service providers or HCPs provide information and supporting documentation for their rural-rate calculations and method used to calculate the rural rate when completing the FCC Form 466. See also Rural Rate.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
FCC CIRCULARITY FACTOR	Service Providers	A percentage value applied to revenue of FCC Forms 499-A/Q filers to prevent their being assessed universal service fees on pass-through charges that they bill to their customers. The FCC sets this value quarterly. Visit USAC's Contribution Factors page to see the current circularity factor.
FCC CONTRIBUTION FACTOR	Service Providers	A percentage value applied to revenue of FCC Forms 499-A/Q filers that indicates what portion of their interstate and international end-user revenue they must contribute to the USF. The FCC sets this value quarterly. Visit USAC's Contribution Factors page to see the current contribution factor.
FCC FORM 460 (ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION FORM)	Rural Health Care	The form HCPs use to establish their eligibility for the HCF and Telecom Programs. Visit the program's eligibility determination page for information about RHC program requirements.
FCC FORM 461 (REQUEST FOR SERVICES FORM)	Rural Health Care	The form HCF Program applicants use to provide information about requested services to enable a fair and open competitive bidding process. The FCC Form 461 must be posted to USAC's website for a minimum of 28 days before the applicant can select a service provider.
FCC FORM 462 (FUNDING REQUEST FORM)	Rural Health Care	The form HCF Program applicants use to identify key information about services or equipment for which they are seeking universal service support. Each individual or consortium applicant must submit a single FCC Form 462 for each service provider detailing their requested service(s), equipment, facilities, rates, service provider name, and date(s) of service provider selection.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
FCC FORM 463 (INVOICE AND REQUEST FOR DISBURSEMENT FORM)	Rural Health Care	The form used to invoice committed funds that are on an approved FCC Form 462. The FCC Form 463 serves as a request to USAC for the disbursement of funding under the HCF Program for the services, equipment, and/or facilities set forth in an applicant's FCL. The filing of the FCC Form 463 is a joint process between the applicant and the vendor (service provider). The applicant initiates the filing of the FCC Form 463, and the vendor reviews and, if needed, revises it before it is submitted to USAC for processing and payment.
FCC FORM 465 (DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES REQUESTED AND CERTIFICATION FORM)	Rural Health Care	The form Telecom Program applicants use to provide information about requested services to enable a fair and open competitive bidding process. The FCC Form 465 must be posted to USAC's website for a minimum of 28 days before the applicant can select a service provider.
FCC FORM 466 (FUNDING REQUEST AND CERTIFICATION FORM)	Rural Health Care	The form Telecom Program applicants use to identify their requested service(s), rates, service provider, and date(s) of service provider selection. Each individual applicant must submit a single form for each service requested.
FCC FORM 469 (INVOICE AND REQUEST FOR DISBURSEMENT FORM)	Rural Health Care	The form used to invoice committed funds that are on an approved FCC Form 466. The FCC Form 469 serves as a request to USAC for the disbursement of funding under the Telecom Program for the services, set forth in an applicant's FCL. The filing of the FCC Form 469 is a joint process between the applicant and the vendor (service provider). The service provider initiates the filing of the FCC Form 469, and the applicant reviews and, if needed, revises it before it is submitted to USAC for processing and payment.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
FCC FORM 470	E-Rate	An FCC form that schools and libraries complete to establish their eligibility for E-Rate support and formally request bids for E-Rate equipment and services from service providers. The certification of FCC Form 470 in EPC initiates the competitive bidding process. The form must then be posted to USAC's website for a minimum of 28 days before the applicant can select a service provider.
FCC FORM 471	E-Rate	An FCC form that schools and libraries use annually to report services ordered and request discounts for those services. Visit the E-Rate program's FCC Form 471 Filing page for additional information.
FCC FORM 471 APPLICATION FILING WINDOW	E-Rate	The period, generally between mid-January and mid-March prior to the start of the funding year, when applicants request E-Rate program support. See also FCC Form 471.
FCC FORM 472 (BILLED ENTITY APPLICANT REIMBURSEMENT (BEAR) FORM)	E-Rate	An FCC form that E-Rate program applicants submit to USAC after paying for services in full to request reimbursement for the discount on those services. Applicants may visit E-Rate's applicant invoicing page for additional details about the BEAR invoicing method.
FCC FORM 473 (SERVICE PROVIDER ANNUAL CERTIFICATION (SPAC) FORM)	E-Rate	An FCC form that service providers file annually to certify their compliance with E-Rate program rules and guidelines. The form must be filed before USAC will pay invoices.
FCC FORM 474 (SERVICE PROVIDER INVOICE (SPI) FORM)	E-Rate	An FCC form that service providers submit to USAC to request reimbursement for discounted eligible services provided to E-Rate program applicants. Service providers may visit E-Rate's service provider invoicing page for additional details about the SPI invoicing method.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
FCC FORM 479 (CERTIFICATION BY ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY TO BILLED ENTITY OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHILDREN'S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT FORM)	E-Rate	An FCC form that E-Rate consortium members (the administrative authority for CIPA purposes) submit annually to their consortium leader to certify that they are in compliance with CIPA. After all FCC Forms 479 are collected, the consortium leader can complete the FCC Form 486. See also Children's Internet Protection Act.
FCC FORM 481 (CARRIER ANNUAL REPORTING DATA COLLECTION FORM)	High Cost	An FCC form that all ETCs in the High Cost and Lifeline programs must file annually by July 1. For High Cost carriers, the form collects outage data, request for service figures, branding information of the carrier's holding company and affiliates, documentation of the carrier's engagement with Tribal governments, certification of voice services pricing, results of network performance tests, certifications on frozen High Cost support, certifications on broadband services, and an annual report on the company's financial condition and operations. For Lifeline carriers, the form collects branding information of the carrier's holding company and its affiliates and terms and conditions of service plans offered to subscribers.
FCC FORM 486 (RECEIPT OF SERVICE CONFIRMATION AND CHILDREN'S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT CERTIFICATION FORM)	E-Rate	An FCC form that E-Rate program applicants file to inform USAC that services have begun and confirm their compliance with CIPA. It must be completed prior to filing a BEAR Form (FCC Form 472) or SPI Form (FCC Form 474) to request reimbursement. See also Children's Internet Protection Act.
FCC FORM 486 NOTIFICATION LETTER	E-Rate	A letter USAC issues to E-Rate program applicants and service providers to indicate that an FCC Form 486 has been successfully processed and invoicing may begin.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
FCC FORM 498	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, High Cost, Service Providers	The FCC form that telecommunications service providers must submit to participate in any of the universal service programs. The form collects contact, remittance, and payment information. Upon completion, the service provider is assigned a nine-digit unique identifier referred to as a 498 ID/Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN). Note: Applicants to the E-Rate program who choose the FCC Form 472 (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form) payment method must also have filed the FCC Form 498.
FCC FORM 498 COMPANY OFFICER	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, High Cost, Service Providers	See 498 Company Officer.
FCC FORM 498 DELEGATED USERS	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, High Cost, Service Providers	See Authorized Users.
FCC FORM 498 GENERAL CONTACT	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, High Cost, Service Providers	See General Contact.
FCC FORM 499 COMPANY OFFICER	Service Providers	See 499 Company Officer.
FCC FORM 499 DELEGATED USERS	Service Providers	See Authorized Users.
FCC FORM 499 ESTIMATION FACTOR	Service Providers	A percentage value provided in the FCC Form 499-A and FCC Form 499-Q instructions that helps filers calculate possible future thresholds of contribution requirements and determine whether they are likely to be eligible for a de minimis exception.
FCC FORM 499 PREPARER	Service Providers	See Preparer.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
FCC FORM 499-A (ANNUAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS REPORTING WORKSHEET FORM)	Service Providers	An FCC form, also known as the Telecommunications Reporting Worksheet, that telecommunications services and/or Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) carriers must file annually with USAC to report their gross billed revenues. All intrastate, interstate, and international providers of telecommunications (including VoIP providers) within the United States, with limited exceptions, are legally obligated to file the FCC Forms 499 by Apr. 1 of each year.
FCC FORM 499-Q (QUARTERLY TELECOMMUNICATIONS REPORTING WORKSHEET FORM)	Service Providers	An FCC form that non-de minimis telecommunications companies are required to submit quarterly to USAC to calculate their USF contributions. The forms are due to USAC on Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1, and Nov. 1 of each year.
FCC FORM 500 (FUNDING COMMITMENT ADJUSTMENT REQUEST FORM)	E-Rate	An FCC form that E-Rate program applicants file to submit changes to funding requests after USAC has issued commitments for those requests, including: adjusting the funding year service start date, adjusting the contract expiration date, cancelling an FRN, reducing an FRN, or requesting a service delivery extension.
FCC FORM 555 (ANNUAL LIFELINE ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER CERTIFICATION FORM)	Lifeline	An annual certification that all Lifeline service providers complete to report the results of the annual subscriber recertification process and de-enrollments. All ETCs that have a SAC assignment from USAC must file an FCC Form 555 with USAC, the FCC, and relevant state and Tribal governments.
FCC REGISTRATION NUMBER (FCC RN)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, High Cost, Service Providers	A 10-digit number assigned by the FCC to a business or individual that registers with the commission. It is associated with an entity’s Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and is required before filing FCC Forms 499-A/Q. Originally called CORES ID.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	An independent agency of the U.S. government established in 1934. The FCC is charged with regulating interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable in all U.S. states and territories. In 1997, the FCC designated USAC to be the independent not-for-profit corporation to administer the universal service fund, in accordance with its rules. The Commission oversees USAC's administration of the USF.
FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT 1996 (FFMIA)	High Cost, Service Providers	A law defining the financial operations and reporting requirements for government entities, including USAC.
FEDERAL GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES (FEDERAL GAAP)	High Cost, Service Providers	Accounting standards issued by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and applicable to all U.S. government agencies. USAC, while legally organized as a not-for-profit organization, operates under the authorization and oversight of the FCC and must comply with these standards.
FINAL REVIEWER (FR)	Rural Health Care	The RHC staffer who conducts a second review of RHC program applications to confirm that the initial review complies with all program requirements. The FR checks each step of the initial review process to verify that the initial reviewer followed the correct procedures, asked the appropriate questions, and received complete answers. If the FR has any concerns, they will return the application to the initial reviewer for follow-up. See also Initial Reviewer.
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)	High Cost, Service Providers	The federal statute that requires U.S. government, state, and other public authorities to disclose previously unreleased or uncirculated information and documents upon request. As an agent of the FCC, USAC is required to respond to FOIA requests. Further information regarding FOIAs, including how to file a request, may be obtained from the FCC's FOIA page.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
FSCS CODES	E-Rate	An identifying code for public libraries issued by the Federal State Cooperative System (FSCS), a cooperative program between the federal government and the states. FSCS data on public libraries is received from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).
FUNDING COMMITMENT DECISION LETTER (FCDL)	E-Rate	A letter sent to E-Rate program applicants and service providers that details USAC's funding decisions. FCDLs are issued in EPC after USAC completes its PIA review. See also Program Integrity Assurance.
FUNDING COMMITMENT LETTER (FCL)	Rural Health Care	A letter USAC sends to RHC program applicants and service providers estimating the USF support amount for the funding year based all of the information in an approved FCC Form 462 or 466.
FUNDING REQUEST NUMBER (FRN)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	A unique identifier that USAC assigns to funding requests in completed FCC Form 462 (RHC program), FCC Form 466 (RHC program), and FCC Form 471 (E-Rate program) applications.
FUNDING YEAR (FY)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	The time period during which universal service program support is provided. At USAC, funding years begin on July 1 and end on June 30 of the following calendar year: e.g., FY2026 begins July 1, 2026 and ends June 30, 2027.
GENERAL CONTACT	E-Rate, High Cost, Service Providers	The service provider or applicant employee responsible for filling out the FCC Form 498. The General Contact has a unique level of permission in USAC's E-File system, with the ability to submit forms, modify data, and add or remove authorized users.
GENERAL FINANCIAL CONTACT	E-Rate	A person who is authorized by an E-Rate applicant to retrieve information on the FCC Form 498 and obtain access to EPC. They may complete, but not certify, updates to the FCC Form 498.
GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES (GAAP)	High Cost, Service Providers	Uniform minimum standards of and guidelines for financial accounting and reporting in the U.S., issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB).

Terms	Programs	Definitions
GENERALLY ACCEPTED AUDITING STANDARDS (GAAS)	High Cost, Service Providers	Standards against which audits are performed for non-public companies in the U.S. GAAS are promulgated by the Auditing Standards Board (ASB) of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA).
GENERALLY ACCEPTED GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS (GAGAS)	High Cost, Service Providers	Standards for performance and financial audits of U.S. government agencies, developed by the GAO. GAGAS apply to audits of both the USF and universal support recipients.
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (GAO)	E-Rate, High Cost, Service Providers	An independent, nonpartisan government agency within the legislative branch that reports on the programs and expenditures of the federal government. As the supreme audit authority of the government, it studies how taxpayer dollars are spent, evaluates program outcomes, audits expenditures, and issues legal opinions.
GOVERNMENT MASTER SERVICE AGREEMENT (MSA)	Rural Health Care	An agreement that eligible HCPs use when they are seeking universal service support for services or equipment purchased from MSAs negotiated by federal, state, Tribal, or local government entities.
HEAD START	E-Rate	A comprehensive child development program that serves preschool-age children and their families. Head Start facilities in some states are eligible for E-Rate program funding. To see which Head Start programs may receive E-Rate funding, visit the program’s Eligibility Table for Non-Traditional Education.
HEALTH CARE PROVIDER (HCP)	Rural Health Care	Entity seeking support for telecommunications services under the RHC program. To see what kinds of HCPs are eligible for RHC support, visit USAC’s HCF Program Eligibility page and Telecom Program Eligibility page.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
HIGH COST PROGRAM	High Cost	One of the four universal service programs administered by USAC. Through legacy (voice) and modernized (broadband) funds, High Cost aims to keep rural telecommunications rates comparable to those in more densely populated, lower-cost urban areas. High Cost is USAC's single biggest program, disbursing about $4 billion each year.
HOUSEHOLD	Lifeline	An individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address as one economic unit by contributing to and sharing income and expenses, whether or not they are related. Only one Lifeline discount is allowed per household.
IMPROPER PAYMENT	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	Any payment that should not have been made, or that was made in an incorrect amount under statutory, contractual, administrative, or other legally applicable requirements. Improper payments are subject to IPIA and IPERA rules. USAC calculates estimates of improper payment rates via the PQA program and provides this information to the FCC.
IMPROPER PAYMENTS ELIMINATION AND RECOVERY ACT (IPERA)	High Cost, Service Providers	A law passed in 2010 to amend IPIA and enhance the federal government's practices for measuring and recovering improper payments.
IMPROPER PAYMENTS INFORMATION ACT (IPIA)	High Cost, Service Providers	A 2002 law that requires USAC to provide the FCC with accurate, timely information about improper payments to program beneficiaries. To comply, USAC created its Payment Quality Assurance (PQA) Program, which assesses specific payments made to beneficiaries in all four programs to determine if these payments were made in accordance with FCC rules. Using results of these assessments, USAC calculates estimates of improper payment rates and provides this information to the FCC.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
INCUMBENT LOCAL EXCHANGE CARRIER (ILEC)	High Cost	A dominant local telecommunications company. This is typically the company that owns the local Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), including local loops, central offices, wire centers, and all wiring in between.
INFORMATION REQUEST	Rural Health Care	An RHC program request sent to RHC applicants that seeks information, clarification, or missing documentation. RHC applicants have 14 calendar days to respond from the date USAC sent the request; applicants may also request a 7-day extension deadline during this period. If the applicant does not respond by the deadline, USAC will render a decision based on original submitted documentation or the form may be denied.
INITIAL REVIEWER (IR)	Rural Health Care	The RHC staffer responsible for confirming that the FCC form and supporting documentation submitted by the applicant is compliant with program rules. IRs are required to follow FCC approved procedures when reviewing a form.
INTERCARRIER COMPENSATION	High Cost	The system of regulated payments among carriers to compensate each other for the origination, transport and termination of telecommunications traffic. In 2011, the FCC adopted rules requiring incumbent carriers to reduce many of these switched access rates over a multi-year period. Carriers are allowed to recover a decreasing portion of revenue lost due to reductions in switched access rates through an “Access Recovery Charge” (ARC) on customer bills. More information is available on USAC’s ICC Recovery page.
INTERNAL CONNECTIONS	E-Rate	Eligible equipment (such as routers, switches, wireless access points, and cabling) considered necessary to transport or distribute broadband within one or more instructional buildings of a single school campus or within one or more non-administrative buildings that comprise a single library branch. A Category Two service type on the ESL. See also Eligible Services List.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER (ISP)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	An organization that provides services for connecting to the public internet. For the purposes of universal service support, ISPs may be referred to as service providers. See also Service Provider.
INTERSTATE TELECOMMUNICATIONS	Service Providers	Telecommunications services that cross state or international borders. All intrastate, interstate, and international U.S. telecommunications providers are legally required to file the FCC Forms 499-A/Q.
INVOICE	E-Rate	A statement or document that (1) service providers submit to USAC after they have provided or completed service to the universal service support applicant or (2) applicants submit to USAC after they have paid for services in full. Invoices are submitted using the E-File system.
INVOICE DEADLINE EXTENSION	E-Rate	A single, one-time 120-day extension of the deadline to submit an invoice – FCC Form 472 (BEAR Form) or FCC Form 474 (SPI Form). The extension must be requested on or before the invoice deadline.
INVOICE STATUS REPORT (ISR)	E-Rate	A report sent to E-Rate service providers upon USAC's receipt of an FCC Form 474 (SPI Form). The report identifies which invoice line items were accepted, modified, and/or denied. For additional information about invoicing in E-Rate, visit the program's Electronic Invoicing page.
LEGALLY BINDING AGREEMENT	E-Rate	An agreement, enforceable by law, between two or more parties that creates an obligation to do, or not do, something. Also known as a contract. Contract definitions and requirements are contained in each state or territory's contract law.
LETTER OF AGENCY (LOA)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	A document authorizing the project coordinator of a consortium leader to apply for universal service support on behalf of other members of the consortium. A LOA may also authorize a consultant to act on behalf of an applicant or service provider.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
LETTER OF CREDIT (LOC)	High Cost	A bank guarantee to safeguard against carrier non-compliance with USAC program rules and deployment requirements. Carriers participating in certain modernized funds must maintain LOCs equal to at least their first year of authorized High Cost support.
LETTER OF EXEMPTION (LOE)	Rural Health Care	A document providing written authorization to the project coordinator of a consortium to file forms and otherwise act on behalf of sites owned and operated by the consortium leader. For additional information about what's required in an LOE, visit the RHC program's Letter of Exemption page.
LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA)	E-Rate	The federal law, 20 U.S.C. Section 9121 et seq., that provides the statutory definition of a library.
LIFELINE ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION FORM	Lifeline	The form enrolled Lifeline subscribers that are not automatically recertified by the National Verifier submit to complete the annual Lifeline recertification process and show they still qualify for the benefit. Every year, USAC will check to confirm that a consumer still qualifies to receive the Lifeline benefit. If their eligibility cannot automatically be confirmed, they will receive a letter in the mail asking them to recertify using this form and additional documentation within 60 days.
LIFELINE APPLICATION FORM	Lifeline	The application consumers complete to apply for the Lifeline benefit. Consumers can apply online at lifelinesupport.org, by mailing a completed paper application, or with the assistance of a participating service provider.
LIFELINE CLAIMS SYSTEM (LCS)	Lifeline	The online filing system that service providers use to submit claims for reimbursement for offering Lifeline-supported services to Lifeline subscribers.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
LIFELINE CONSUMER	Lifeline	Any individual may qualify to receive the Lifeline benefit if their household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, or if they participate in SNAP, Medicaid, or other government assistance programs. Consumers need to apply to receive the benefit. For more information on the application process, visit lifelinesupport.org.
LIFELINE CONSUMER ADVOCATES	Lifeline	Individuals or organizations such as case workers, digital navigators, housing assistance staff, or shelter staff that partner with Lifeline to generate awareness about the program and support Lifeline consumers in receiving the Lifeline benefit.
LIFELINE PROGRAM	Lifeline	One of the four universal service programs administered by USAC. The program offers a monthly benefit of up to $9.25 towards qualifying phone or internet services for eligible subscribers, or up to $34.25 for those living on qualifying Tribal lands.
LIFELINE PROGRAM ONE-PER-HOUSEHOLD WORKSHEET	Lifeline	The worksheet consumers complete to ensure that no more than one household receives Lifeline at their address. More than one person at an address may receive the Lifeline benefit, but only one benefit may be received per household. See also Household.
LIFELINE SUPPORT CENTER	Lifeline	Helps consumers with applying for Lifeline, understanding eligibility requirements, and the annual recertification process. The Lifeline Support Center is open every day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET and may be reached by calling (800) 234-9473 or emailing LifelineSupport@usac.org.
LIFELINESUPPORT.ORG	Lifeline	USAC’s official consumer-facing Lifeline website that provides information about the Lifeline benefit, how to apply, manage the benefit once enrolled, and access support resources. The site includes downloadable handouts for consumer advocates and providers to support outreach and awareness efforts.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
LOCAL AREA NETWORK (LAN)	E-Rate	A data network that provides connections generally within an eligible school or library to other locations within the school or library.
LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY (LNP)	Service Providers	The ability granted to consumers to retain their telephone number when switching telecommunications companies. USAC is statutorily responsible for calculating carrier contributions to the Local Number Portability Administration (LNPA) database.
LOWEST CORRESPONDING PRICE (LCP)	E-Rate	The lowest price that a service provider charges to non-residential customers who are similarly situated to a particular E-Rate program applicant (school, library, or consortium) for similar services.
MANAGED INTERNAL BROADBAND SERVICES (MIBS)	E-Rate	Services provided by a third party for the operation, management, and monitoring of internal connections components. E-Rate support is limited to eligible expenses or portions of expenses that directly support and are necessary for broadband connectivity within schools and libraries. A Category Two service type on the ESL. See also Eligible Services List.
MANAGED WI-FI	E-Rate	See Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS).
MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER (MO&O)	High Cost, Service Providers	Order issued by the FCC to deny a petition for rulemaking, modify a decision, grant or deny a petition for reconsideration, or grant or deny an application for review of a decision. A second or third Memorandum Opinion and Order (2nd MO&O/3rd MO&O) may also be issued.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
MINI-BID	E-Rate	An evaluation process used by E-Rate applicants when a state files an FCC Form 470 and signs state master contracts with more than one service provider. The applicant must evaluate all eligible state master contracts by determining the factors to use for its evaluation, with the price of eligible equipment and services as the most heavily-weighted factor, and demonstrate why the service provider it chooses is the most cost-effective solution.
MINISTERIAL AND CLERICAL (M&C) ERRORS	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	Also known as M&C errors, these are data entry mistakes: e.g., mistyping a number or incorrectly calculating arithmetic. M&C errors on FCC forms may be corrected after the forms are certified by USAC.
MIXED MERGER	High Cost	A transaction in which a carrier receiving legacy, cost-based support acquires or is acquired by a carrier receiving fixed monthly support, such as model-based funding. Carriers that have been part of a mixed merger are subject to an FCC condition that caps the operating expenses of the carriers of the combined entity that receive cost-based support in order to prevent potential cost shifting. More information is available on USAC's Mixed Merger Requirements page.
MULTIPLE BILL (MULTI-BILL) CIRCUIT	Rural Health Care	A data or voice network connection between two locations ("circuit") that involves more than one telecommunications carrier. Customers served by a multi-bill circuit receive a bill from each participating carrier.
MY PORTAL	Rural Health Care	USAC's legacy online application system for the RHC program. Applicants submitted all FCC forms (FCC Forms 460, 461, 462, and 463 for the HCF Program and FCC Forms 465, 466, and 469 for the Telecom Program) in My Portal. My Portal has been replaced by RHC Connect for FY2022 and future funding years for the HCF Program and FY2024 and future funding years for the Telecom Program.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
NATIONAL AVERAGE COST PER LOOP (NACPL)	High Cost	A metric, determined monthly by NECA, that is used to calculate legacy High Cost support.
NATIONAL EXCHANGE CARRIER ASSOCIATION (NECA)	High Cost, Service Providers	A rural carrier association that collects and validates cost and revenue data for member companies, distributes revenue from access charges among pool members, and helps members file access charge tariffs with the FCC and comply with FCC rules.
NATIONAL LIFELINE ACCOUNTABILITY DATABASE (NLAD)	Lifeline	A system used by service providers to enroll qualifying consumers in the Lifeline program and to manage their Lifeline subscribers, including the detection and elimination of duplicative support.
NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (NSLP)	E-Rate	A federal program that provides school lunches to eligible students at a free or reduced rate. A school system's NSLP participation rate (i.e., the number of students enrolled in the NSLP divided by the total student population) is one measure of poverty that schools may use to calculate their discount rates in the E-Rate program. For additional information about discount calculations in E-Rate, visit the program's Calculating Discounts page.
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION (NTIA)	High Cost, Service Providers	Part of the Department of Commerce, the NTIA sets federal telecommunications policy and provides telecommunications grants to various entities. It differs from the FCC in two key respects: 1) the FCC is an independent agency, while the NTIA falls under the executive branch; and 2) the NTIA has jurisdiction over federal government communications, while state and local government communications are within the purview of the FCC.
NATIONAL VERIFIER	Lifeline	An online application system that facilitates the determination of consumer eligibility for the Lifeline benefit and is also used to complete annual recertification for existing subscribers.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
NCES CODES	E-Rate	An identification code for public schools issued by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education. Private schools may also request NCES codes.
NETWORK COST WORKSHEET (NCW)	Rural Health Care	A breakdown of costs associated with the network for which support is being sought under the HCF Program. It is a Microsoft Excel version of the expense items page of the FCC Form 462. The NCW can be exported from or imported into My Portal and RHC Connect. See also FCC Form 462.
NETWORK PLAN	Rural Health Care	A narrative detailing how a consortium of HCPs plans to create, deploy, and manage a proposed broadband network. All consortia applicants in the HCF Program are required to submit a network plan with the FCC Form 461. See the RHC program's Network Plan page for additional information about what a plan must include.
NEWS BRIEF	E-Rate	A monthly newsletter that provides up-to-date E-Rate program information, including important dates, tips regarding the application process, and other breaking news. Visit E-Rate's News Brief page to view past News Briefs and subscribe.
NON-AUDIT RECOVERY	Rural Health Care	A recovery of funds that is not identified through an audit.
NON-DISCOUNT PORTION	E-Rate	An applicant's share of the cost of eligible equipment and services in the E-Rate program. Also known as the non-discount share, this is the amount the applicant pays after all E-Rate program discounts are applied.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL FACILITY (NIF)	E-Rate	A school building without classrooms or a library building without public areas. Examples of school NIFs include administrative buildings, bus barns, and cafeteria facilities. Examples of library NIFs include administrative buildings, bookmobile garages, and interlibrary loan facilities. NIFs are eligible to receive E-Rate program discounts on Category One services only. Visit the E-Rate program's NIFs page for additional information.
NON-RECURRING CHARGES (NRC)	Rural Health Care	RHC program support for any one-time cost, including installation of service, equipment, etc. Also known as non-recurring support.
NON-STANDARD IMPROPER PAYMENT	Rural Health Care	An improper payment not identified through an audit, review, or investigation. See also Improper Payment.
NORTH AMERICAN NUMBERING PLAN (NANP)	Service Providers	The integrated telephone numbering plan serving 20 North American countries. Information collected on the FCC Form 499-A is also used to calculate contributions to the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA).
NOTICE OF APPARENT LIABILITY (NAL)	High Cost, Service Providers	An order issued by the FCC advising a party that it has violated an FCC rule or procedure and proposing a penalty. The party has an opportunity to file a response, which the FCC will evaluate.
NOTICE OF INQUIRY (NOI)	High Cost, Service Providers	A request made by the FCC to the public to comment on specific questions about an issue. The public's responses help the FCC to determine if further action by the FCC is warranted.
NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING (NPRM)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, High Cost, Service Providers	An FCC proposal for new rules or changes to existing rules. Following the issuance of an NPRM, the FCC will seek public comments on the proposal.
NOTICE OF RESOLVED ISSUE (NORI)	Rural Health Care, Lifeline	A sub-category of ADL that is issued if USAC's Appeals team identifies that the USAC decision made during operational review was not compliant with FCC rules and requirements.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL (OIG)	High Cost, Service Providers	A division of the FCC that provides independent and objective audits and investigations relating to agency programs and operations. May conduct audits or investigations of universal service support recipients, contributors, or service providers.
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB)	E-Rate, High Cost, Service Providers	Part of the Executive Office of the President, OMB reviews and approves FCC forms that are used by USF contributors and universal service program participants, contributors, and service providers.
ONE PORTAL	USAC General, E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	USAC's single sign-on online dashboard for accessing systems such as EPC, the National Verifier, NLAD, LCS, and RAD, as well as the E-File forms submission tool and many invoicing functions. Certain payment processes are also handled through One Portal. Accessible at https://forms.universalservice.org/portal/login.
OPEN DATA	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A web portal with datasets and tools available for universal service program data. Users can view, search, filter, and manipulate the data in each dataset and extract that data in a variety of formats. Users can also extract data via API calls. Accessible at https://opendata.usac.org/.
OPERATIONAL SPIN CHANGE	E-Rate	A change by an E-Rate applicant to the service provider on one or more FRNs as a result of a change in the service provider providing the services. Visit the E-Rate program's Operational SPIN Changes page for additional information.
PAST DUE LETTER (PDL)	Rural Health Care, Lifeline	A letter USAC sends to a universal service support applicant who has received a DPL but has not returned the funds owed within the stipulated 30 days. The PDL notifies the applicant that they are past due and that failure to pay the outstanding funds will be reported to Treasury if payment is not made within 30 days of the date on the PDL.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
PAYMENT QUALITY ASSURANCE (PQA) PROGRAM	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A USAC program that assesses payments made to universal service support recipients to determine if the payments were made in accordance with FCC rules. Following these assessments, USAC estimates improper payment rates and provides this information to the FCC.
PREPARER	E-Rate, High Cost, Service Providers	The employee of a telecommunications company that filed FCC Form 499-A/Q who has access to submit and modify data in USAC's E-File system.
PRICE CAP CARRIER	High Cost	A category of telecommunications carrier participating in the High Cost program. Typically large incumbent providers, price cap carriers are allowed to charge a maximum price and then manage costs within that revenue structure.
PRICING TRANSPARENCY	E-Rate	Provides greater visibility into pricing and technology choices by applicants. Information and pricing regarding the specific services and equipment purchased by schools and libraries are publicly available on USAC's website.
PROGRAM INTEGRITY ASSURANCE (PIA)	E-Rate	The E-Rate program's process for reviewing FCC Forms 471 to ensure compliance with FCC and program rules. These reviews must be completed before USAC makes funding commitments. USAC sends all communications about PIA through EPC. For additional information about E-Rate's PIA process, visit the program's Application Review page.
PUBLIC NOTICE (PN)	E-Rate, High Cost, Service Providers	A notice issued by the FCC alerting the public of an action taken, a change made, or an upcoming event. PNs are used to announce NOIs, NPRMs, and FNPRMs (Further Notices of Proposed Rulemaking).
QUARTERLY DISBURSEMENT REPORT	E-Rate	A report issued by USAC to E-Rate applicants detailing all invoicing activity for all funding years that occurred during the previous quarter.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
RATE OF RETURN CARRIER	High Cost	A category of telecommunications carrier participating in the High Cost program. Typically small rural providers, rate of return carriers set prices based on embedded costs that incorporate a return on equity.
RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGMENT LETTER (RAL)	E-Rate	A letter sent to E-Rate applicants and service providers indicating that a filed FCC Form 471 has been certified. The RAL provides means to correct any mistakes before the FCC Form 471 undergoes PIA review. Visit the E-Rate program's FCC Form 471 Filing page for additional information.
RECOVERY OF IMPROPERLY DISBURSED FUNDS (RIDF)	E-Rate	A letter sent to impacted parties seeking to recover disbursed funds. A RIDF letter is issued when the original approved commitment is correct, but funds were disbursed in error. If no action is taken, demand payment letters will follow providing an opportunity to return the funds. Visit the E-Rate program's Commitment Adjustment page for additional information.
RED LIGHT RULE	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A requirement that the FCC withhold action on a universal service support application, payment, and/or other requests for benefits when the universal service program participant is delinquent in non-tax debts owed to the FCC or other federal agencies. This rule requires that USAC suspend support to any entity that shares a Tax Identification Number with a company that has a delinquent debt. See also Red Light Status.
RED LIGHT STATUS	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	The status of an entity deemed to have violated the Red Light Rule. USAC will not make any disbursements until the entity's delinquency is satisfied, payment arrangements are made, or the Red Light Status is otherwise resolved. See also Red Light Rule.
REMAND	E-Rate	Action taken by the FCC to return applications to USAC for further review.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
REPRESENTATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY DATABASE (RAD)	Lifeline	A registration system that validates the identities of Lifeline service provider representatives performing transactions in the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) and National Verifier. To create an account in RAD, visit USAC's How to Register page.
REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	Rural Health Care	A notification USAC sends to an RHC applicant if their response to a USAC Information Request is insufficient or incomplete. Through the Request for Additional Information, USAC seeks further clarification or documentation. See also Information Request.
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	A formal bidding document describing a project and/or requested services in sufficient detail so that potential bidders understand the scope, location, and any other requirements. In the E-Rate and RHC programs, applicants are required to submit an RFP with their universal service support applications under certain conditions. Visit the E-Rate program's Competitive Bidding page for additional detail.
REVISED FUNDING COMMITMENT DECISION LETTER (RFCDL)	E-Rate	A letter USAC issues to E-Rate applicants and service providers when changes to a funding commitment occur, such as the result of an appeal.
RHC CONNECT	Rural Health Care	The web-based system that hosts RHC forms in the RHC program. Post-commitment change requests (e.g., SPIN changes) also take place in RHC Connect. All RHC activities will eventually migrate to RHC Connect, at which time the legacy web-based system My Portal will be phased out.
RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM	Rural Health Care	One of the four universal service programs administered by USAC. RHC includes two programs: the Telecommunications (Telecom) Program and the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program. These programs provide reduced rates for telecommunications services and broadband services to eligible health care providers (HCPs).

Terms	Programs	Definitions
RURAL RATE	Rural Health Care	The rate charged by a telecommunications carrier for services in the rural area where an HCP is located. The rural rate, used to calculate RHC program support, is established using one of three methods. For an overview of those methods and the rate-calculation process for FY2026, browse RHC's Urban and Rural Rates Tip Sheet.
SAFE CONNECTIONS ACT (SCA)	Lifeline	A 2022 federal law that makes it easier for survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, or related crimes to sever ties with their abusers by separating themselves from a shared wireless telephone plan. Under the SCA, survivors experiencing financial hardship may also receive up to six months of support from the Lifeline program. For more information about the Lifeline application process for survivors, visit the program's SCA page.
SCHOOL OR LIBRARY OFFICIAL	E-Rate	A person who occupies a position of authority for an E-Rate applicant and is responsible for certifying that the information provided on the FCC Form 498 is true, accurate, and complete. This role typically falls to a superintendent, principal, library director, or other administrator and cannot be assigned to a consultant.
SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES CYBERSECURITY PILOT PROGRAM (PILOT PROGRAM)	E-Rate	A three-year, $200 million FCC program that will evaluate the effectiveness of using Universal Service funding to support cybersecurity services and equipment to protect school and library broadband networks and data. Open to schools, libraries, and consortia of schools and libraries that meet the E-Rate program's eligibility requirements, the Cybersecurity Pilot Program accepted applications in 2024 and announced the applicants selected to participate in early 2025.
SELECTIVE REVIEW	E-Rate	A component of the E-Rate program's PIA review that follows up on certifications that applicants make on their FCC Forms 471 about the competitive bidding process and the necessary resources to make effective use of requested services. See also Program Integrity Assurance.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
SELECTIVE REVIEW INFORMATION REQUEST (SRIR)	E-Rate	A request for information sent to E-Rate applicants when they have been chosen for Selective Review. See also Selective Review.
SERVICE END DATE	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	The date that services will end for an FRN. Also referred to as Service Delivery Deadline, this date aligns with the end of the funding year (June 30) for which support is sought. USAC may adjust this date if it identifies a program violation or a missed deadline.
SERVICE INSTALLATION DATE	Rural Health Care	The date that services were or will be installed for an FRN in the RHC program. USAC may adjust this date if a program violation is identified, or a deadline is missed.
SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)	Rural Health Care	Minimum criteria for telecommunications service as indicated in a contract submitted with an RHC program funding request form (FCC Form 462 or 466). Contracts may include SLAs for service elements like latency and reliability but are not required to for the receipt of RHC program support.
SERVICE PROVIDER	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A telecommunications company that participates in at least one of the four universal service programs and provides voice or internet services, equipment, hardware, or software. Types of companies include but are not limited to: competitive access/competitive local exchange carriers (cellular, personal communications, or specialized mobile radio providers), incumbent local exchange carriers, interexchange carriers, internet service providers, interconnected VoIP providers, local resellers (coaxial cable, non-traditional, operator, paging, messaging, payphone, prepaid card, private, and satellite service providers), shared-tenant service providers or building local exchange carriers, SMR (dispatch), toll resellers, or wireless data providers.
SERVICE PROVIDER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (SPIN)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	See 498 ID/Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN).

Terms	Programs	Definitions
SERVICE START DATE	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	The date that services will commence for an FRN. USAC may adjust this date if it identifies a program violation or a missed deadline.
SERVICE SUBSTITUTION	E-Rate, Rural Health Care	A change in the equipment or services originally requested for an FRN. For additional detail on service substitutions in E-Rate, visit the program's Service Substitutions page.
SPAC – FCC FORM 473	E-Rate	See FCC Form 473.
SPI – FCC FORM 474	E-Rate	See FCC Form 474.
STANDARD IMPROPER PAYMENT	Rural Health Care	Any improper payment in the RHC program identified through a BCAP or OIG audit or PQA review.
STATE AND FEDERAL PARTNERS	Lifeline	State and federal government agencies who partner with Lifeline to increase program awareness, build and maintain database connections to qualify consumers for the Lifeline program, and support consumers in completing program processes.
STATE MASTER CONTRACT (SMC)	E-Rate	A contract that is competitively bid and that a state government implements which can be used by eligible entities within the state to procure equipment or services, or both. Visit the E-Rate program's State Master Contracts page for additional detail about considering an SMC as a bid for service.
STATE REPLACEMENT CONTRACT	E-Rate	A state master contract, filed pursuant to a state-filed FCC Form 470, which can replace an existing state master contract that expires before the end of the upcoming funding year.
STUDY AREA AVERAGE COST PER LOOP (SACPL)	High Cost	A cost metric, determined monthly by NECA, that is used to calculate High Cost support.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
STUDY AREA CODE (SAC)	Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A unique number that USAC assigns to ETCs identifying the company by its service area. Companies must have at least one SAC per state in which they operate, but can have more than one SAC within a state if they have more than one service area.
SUBSCRIBER LINE CHARGE (SLC)	High Cost	The amount carriers charge customers for telecommunications service.
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	The transmission, between or among points specified by the user, of information of the user's choosing, without change in the form or content of the information as sent and received.
TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	See Common Carrier.
TELECOMMUNICATIONS PLANT IN SERVICE (TPIS)	High Cost	The cost of the property, plant, and equipment in a carrier's operation.
TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICES (TRS)	Service Providers	A type of telephone service that allows persons with hearing or speech disabilities to place and receive telephone calls. Information collected on the FCC Form 499-A is also used to calculate contributions to the Telecommunications Relay Service administrator.
TRIBAL LIBRARY E-RATE ADVOCACY PROGRAM (T-LEAP)	E-Rate, Tribal Nations	A program to support Tribal E-Rate applicants in the E-Rate application process. T-LEAP matches participating public Tribal libraries and Tribal College and University libraries with their own Tribal Library Advocate (TLA) who provides one-on-one assistance in preparing E-Rate applications, applying to the program, invoicing, and performing other post-commitment processes. For more information about T-LEAP and to register, visit USAC's T-LEAP page.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
TRIBAL PARTNERS	Lifeline, Tribal Nations	Tribal governments, government agencies, advocates, and nonprofits serving Tribal communities who partner with Lifeline to generate awareness about the Lifeline program and support consumers with applying for and managing the Lifeline benefit.
UNIVERSAL SERVICE	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	The principle that all people in the United States should have access to telecommunications (voice and internet) services at reasonable rates. The USF, and later USAC, were established by the FCC to achieve this objective.
UNIVERSAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPANY (USAC)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	The independent not-for-profit organization designated by the FCC as the neutral, third-party administrator of the USF and its four programs. Collectively, the fund disbursed more than $8.5 billion in universal service support in 2024.
UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND (USF)	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	Money collected from telecommunications companies and allocated to the objective of achieving universal service, per the 1996 Telecommunications Act. All interstate and international voice carriers operating in the U.S. must make contributions to the USF equal to a percentage of their interstate end-user revenues. The FCC updates this percentage, known as the contribution factor, quarterly. USAC's role is to collect and disburse the USF.
UPFRONT PAYMENTS	Rural Health Care	All non-recurring costs, other than reasonable and customary installation charges, that exceed $5,000. Upfront payments are only eligible for consortium applicants in HCF. (See 47 CFR§ 54.638 Upfront payments).
URBAN RATE	Rural Health Care	The urban rate shall be a rate no higher than the highest tariffed or publicly available rate charged to a commercial customer for a functionally similar service provided within any city with a population of 50,0000 or more in that state. For an overview of the urban and rural rate-calculation process for FY2026, use RHC's Urban and Rural Rates Tip Sheet.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
URBAN/RURAL STATUS	E-Rate	A designation for E-Rate program applicants based on U.S. Census data. Entities in areas defined as rural by the FCC are entitled to additional E-Rate program funding in certain circumstances. Visit the E-Rate program's Urban/Rural Status page for additional details.
VENDOR SELECTION DATE	Rural Health Care	The date on which an agreement is awarded to a service provider, or the service provider is selected by the RHC applicant. RHC program rules state that an applicant must wait a minimum of 28 days after posting the FCC Forms 461 or 465 on USAC's website before selecting a service provider.
VOICE OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL (VOIP)	High Cost, Service Providers	A technology that digitizes analog voice signals and transmits them over the internet. VoIP calls may be placed between VoIP users or sent over the public switched telephone network (PSTN) to dial conventional phone numbers.
WAVE	E-Rate	A group of funding commitment notifications that USAC issues to E-Rate applicants and service providers on a given date. Waves are usually issued weekly.
WHISTLEBLOWER ALERT	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A hotline allowing members of the public to anonymously report suspected violations of universal service program rules to USAC. These reports can be made anonymously via the USAC Whistleblower Alert Form, by emailing WhistleblowerReports@usac.org, by calling (888) 203-8100, or by U.S. mail to: Attn: Fraud Risk GroupUniversal Service Administrative Co.700 12th Street, NW, Suite 900 Washington, DC 20005
WIDE AREA NETWORK (WAN)	E-Rate	A data* network that provides connections from within a school or library to other locations beyond the school or library. *The voice and video components of a WAN are not eligible for E-Rate discounts.
WITHDRAWN	Rural Health Care, Lifeline	The status that USAC designates to an FCC form that has been removed or pulled out of the review queue at the request of the applicant.