Universal Service Administrative Co.

E-Rate Glossary of Terms

Use this E-Rate 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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
COMMISSION	E-Rate, Rural Health Care, Lifeline, High Cost, Service Providers	A common abbreviation for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). See also FCC.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
CONTRACT EXPIRATION DATE (CED)	E-Rate	The date a contract ends between an applicant and service provider.
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.
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/.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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 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
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.
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.
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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 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 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 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.
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 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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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).
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.
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.

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.
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-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.
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.
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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 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).
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.

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.
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.
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.
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
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.
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.
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

Terms	Programs	Definitions
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.