



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

E-Rate

E-Rate News Brief

February 16, 2023

Funding Year (FY) 2023 FCC Form 471 Filing Window Countdown

The Funding Year (FY) 2023 FCC Form 471 application filing window is now open. The application filing **window will close on Tuesday, March 28, 2023** at 11:59:59 p.m. ET.

Days to window close	40
FY2023 FCC Forms 470 filed	18,273
FY2023 FCC Forms 471 filed	7,241

FCC Forms 470 and 471 counts as of yesterday, 9:00 p.m. EST

FY2023 E-RATE TIPS:

- **File Early. The FY2023 FCC Form 471 application filing window closes March 28.** The earlier applicants submit and certify their FCC Form 471, the sooner USAC can begin reviewing your application. Please do not wait until the last minute to submit and certify your form, especially if you need help or have questions about what information to include on your form. Visit the [FCC Form 471 Filing](#) page to learn more.
- **Tuesday, February 28, 2023** is the last date that you can submit and certify an FCC Form 470 **and still wait the required minimum 28-day period** before submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471 by March 28, 2023, the last date of the FY2023 application filing window.
- **FCC Form 471 bulk upload templates and a user guide** are available on the [FCC Form 471 Filing](#) page. The templates allow applicants with large numbers of eligible services and/or large numbers of recipients of service to prepare funding request data by completing the templates and then uploading the data to their FCC Form 471. The [FCC Form 471 Bulk Upload User Guide](#) contains detailed information for each service type and all of the fields in each template.
- **Unresponsive Bids, "SPAM" Bids and "Robobids."** All bids received should be acknowledged. Disqualification factors can be used to apply to the bids received that do not meet minimum bid requirements, do not include site- or project-specific details, and/or are not responsive to the applicant's requests. Applicants may include language in their FCC Form 470 narrative or request for proposal (RFP), such as, "SPAM and/or robotic responses will not be considered valid bid responses and will be disqualified from consideration." By doing this, applicants can acknowledge the response(s) were

received but were disqualified, based on this factor. The decision to disqualify any non-responsive bids should also be memorialized and retained to demonstrate compliance with the competitive bidding rules.

E-RATE TIPS:

- **Account Administrators.** Review account permissions of all users associated with your EPC account(s) and make any necessary adjustments. If you are planning to leave your entity, please designate a new Account Administrator in EPC before your departure.
- **Billed Entities.** Applicants, make sure your organization's profile in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) is up to date or it may affect your ability to receive payments. **If USAC requests a Service Certification, only authorized users under the BEN** may sign and confirm that the products/services on the invoice were received and installed. Signatures from unauthorized users may result in a rejection of your invoice.
- **Training Recordings Available on Demand.** USAC offered a series of online training sessions for E-Rate program participants, including Tribal applicants, in Fall 2022 and January 2023, to help prepare for the FY2023 FCC Form 471 application filing window. You can register to watch a recording using the links available under **Previous Trainings** on the E-Rate [Webinars](#) page. View the Questions and Answers from all the sessions on the E-Rate [Resources](#) page.
- **The E-Rate Pre-Commitment Office Hour webinar** will be held on Tuesday, **February 21 from 2 PM to 3 PM ET**. This webinar is designed as a question-and-answer session. Participants should review the [prerequisite materials](#) prior to the webinar and come with questions for the E-Rate subject matter experts, who will answer questions about the competitive bidding process, Category Two budgets, and the Eligible Services List. This is recommended for applicants and service providers of all E-Rate experience levels. [Register](#) to participate.

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Commitments for Funding Year (FY) 2022

FY2022. USAC released FY2022 Wave 43 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on February 9. As of February 15, FY2022 commitments total over \$2.82 billion.

On the date that FCDLs are issued, you can access your FCDL notification from the **Notifications** section of your landing page in EPC.

Upcoming February 27 Invoicing Deadline for FY2021 Recurring Services

February 27, 2023 is the deadline to submit an invoice **for FY2021 recurring services** if the applicant or service provider requested and received a one-time extension of the earlier October 28, 2022 deadline.

Any invoices submitted after this date will be denied as untimely and will require a waiver of the invoice filing deadline rule from the FCC. Parties requesting a waiver will need to demonstrate extraordinary circumstances to justify a waiver of the invoice filing deadline date.

Requesting an invoice filing deadline extension

If you need additional time to complete your invoicing process and have not already requested and received a 120-day extension, you can [request an extension](#) of the February 27 invoicing deadline. If the request is received before the February 27, 2023 deadline and approved, you will receive an additional 120 days to complete your invoicing process. USAC cannot approve an additional extension, if you already requested and received a 120-day extension of the invoice filing deadline for your FRN.

All invoices and invoice deadline extension requests must be submitted on or before your invoice filing deadline date. If you do not know your invoice filing deadline date, the new [E-Rate FRN Invoice Deadline Tool](#) provides the ability to search, view, and download data related to FRN(s) and the applicable invoice filing deadline date(s).

Reminders for Filing an FY2023 FCC Form 471

Below are reminders for some of the actions you should be undertaking before the FY2023 application filing window closes on **March 28, 2023**.

Wait the required, minimum-28 day period before selecting your service provider(s), and before submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471.

You must wait the required, minimum 28-day period after your [FCC Form 470](#) is certified and posted, before you may choose a service provider, sign a contract (if applicable), and submit and certify your FCC Form 471. Changes to the FCC Form 470 beyond the [allowable changes](#) require applicants to restart the minimum 28-day waiting period from the date of the substantial change, before selecting a service provider, signing a contract, or submitting and certifying an FCC Form 471.

Additionally, if you upload your RFP or RFP documents after you certified and submitted your FCC Form 470, you are required to wait a minimum 28-day period from the date you uploaded your RFP or RFP documents. The minimum 28-day waiting period is based on the date of your certified and posted FCC Form 470 or uploaded RFP, whichever was filed later, if they are not posted together on the same date.

- EPC will not allow you to create a contract record, if the FCC Form 470 you try to cite for the contract, was not posted for at least 28 days.
- Once the minimum 28-day waiting period has ended and a service provider is selected, the applicant must have a [binding agreement](#) prior to the submission of the FCC Form 471. Note that a verbal agreement is not considered a legally binding agreement under E-Rate program rules.
- For services provided under tariff or on a month-to-month basis, EPC will not allow you to finish entering a funding request for those services if the cited FCC Form 470 was not posted for at least 28 days.

Make sure that you are able to work on an FCC Form 471.

Your account administrator must have granted you user rights to complete and/or certify the FCC Form

471. Note that new users must first accept the [terms and conditions](#) for EPC by clicking the **Tasks** tab from the menu at the top of the landing page and choosing the appropriate task.

- After your rights have been assigned, you can click the **FCC Form 471** link at the top of your organization's landing page to start your form.
- If you have access to the form but cannot enter information or take other actions, call our
- Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100, for assistance.

Start your FCC Form 471, even if you are not ready to provide all funding request details.

After you start your form, you can see your progress through the form by referring to the progress bar at the top of each page. If you need to stop before you have finished, the system will create a task for you under the **Tasks** tab to allow you to resume your work at the point you left. Be sure to review the following as you work through your form:

- Your organization's information (e.g., name, address, telephone number, attributes).
- Your related entities' information (e.g., name, address, urban/rural status, attributes, student counts for schools, library square footage and library main branch designation for libraries).
- Your organization's urban/rural designation and discount calculation.

Because entity profiles are locked, you will not be able to make any entity changes at this point. However, by making a note of any necessary updates, you will be ready to submit a **RAL Modification Request** (see [article below](#)) to inform us of those updates.

Create a contract record for each new contract or legally binding agreement.

You must have a contract record in your profile for each contract or legally binding agreement you intend to use on your FY2023 FCC Form 471. You then cite to the contract record for the services that will be provided under that contract, when you are creating a funding request on your form.

- If you created a contract record in an earlier year for a multi-year contract that covers your services for FY2023, you should cite to that contract record for this year.
- If you created a contract record in an earlier year for a contract with voluntary extensions, you do not need to create a new contract record, if the extension will cover services for all of FY2023. First, work with your service provider to exercise the extension for your FY2023 services. Then, when you cite to that contract record for the funding request for these services, enter the last date of service for FY2023 (i.e., June 30, 2024) in the contract end date field for that request. You do not have to create a new contract record simply because you exercised an option to extend the contract.
- Learn How to Create a Contract Record:
 - [How to Create a Contract Record](#) video.
 - [How to Create a Contract Record for Commercially Available Broadband/Low Cost High Speed Internet Access](#) (which is exempt from competitive bidding) video.
 - Contact the CSC as soon as possible if you need assistance.

You can open a customer service case in EPC or call CSC at (888) 203-8100. **Do not wait until the end of the application filing window to contact us with questions or issues.** If you choose to open a customer service case, you will also be able to upload one or more documents that provide additional information we need to process your request.

Interim SPIN Will Be Available March 14 for FY2023 FCC Form 471 Submissions

Some service providers who are new to the E-Rate program may have applied for, but not yet received, a [Service Provider Identification Number](#) (SPIN). Some applicants, whose service providers have multiple

SPINs or are undergoing a merger or acquisition, may not be sure which SPIN to include on an FCC Form 471 funding request.

In such cases, USAC enables an "interim SPIN" (1436666666) shortly before the close of the FCC Form 471 application filing window. **The interim SPIN will be available starting March 14, 2023.** However, we encourage applicants to provide the correct SPIN for their FCC Form 471 funding requests, whenever possible, to speed USAC's review of their application.

Applicants can file an FCC Form 471 funding request and use this interim SPIN as a placeholder so they can timely file their form during the application filing window. They can then update the SPIN through a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) Modification Request (see [article below](#)) or during the [review of their application](#).

Use the RAL Modification Request to Update Certified FCC Form 471 Information

USAC issues an FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) to both the applicant and service provider(s) in EPC after an FCC Form 471 application is certified. The letter contains many of the details submitted on the FCC Form 471 and provides a means to correct any errors or mistakes. If you were not able to make all of the appropriate updates to your profile in EPC before the close of the EPC FCC Form 471 administrative window, you can provide updated profile information by filing a RAL Modification Request after submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471 application(s) but before you receive your funding commitment decision letter(s).

Applicants receive the RAL in their EPC **News** Feed after certifying an FCC Form 471. The RAL modification function in EPC allows you to provide specific information in an organized format, which makes it easier for Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) reviewers to locate and understand the changes you want to make. Go to the [Ministerial & Clerical Errors](#) page to see the types of changes that are allowed and not allowed for the FCC Form 471. To learn how to submit modification requests for your FCC Form(s) 471, you can also view the [FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter Modification Guide](#).

Coming Soon: UEI Required on FCC Form 498 for Applicants

On April 6, 2022, the FCC released a Public Notice ([DA-22-371](#)) announcing that the General Services Administration's SAM.gov will transition from the use of the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to the SAM.gov assigned Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). In the [September 15, 2022 E-Rate News Brief](#), USAC announced that all service providers receiving funding through the universal service programs will be required to obtain and use a UEI when making changes to their existing or submitting a new FCC Form 498.

USAC will soon require **all E-Rate applicants with a 498 ID** (i.e., that use the billed entity applicant reimbursement (BEAR) method for reimbursement) to obtain and use the SAM.gov UEI when making changes to their existing or submitting a new FCC Form 498. E-Rate applicants that do not currently have a 498 ID or only uses, or will only use, the service provider invoicing (SPI) method for reimbursement, are not required to register in SAM.gov to obtain a UEI.

In the second quarter of 2023 (i.e., between April and June 2023), USAC **will update the FCC Form 498 for all E-Rate applicants** to require entities to have an active UEI to submit a new FCC Form 498 or modify their existing FCC Form 498 if they will be using the BEAR method of reimbursement. After this deployment, the FCC Form 498 system will only accept the applicant's UEI if the following criteria are met:

- SAM.gov registration for your entity is active;

- Employer Identification Number (EIN) for the UEI matches the EIN for the FCC Registration Number; and
- EIN for the UEI matches the EIN on the FCC Form 498.

The update of the FCC Form 498 will only affect E-Rate applicants that must submit a new FCC Form 498 or revise their current FCC Form 498, after the deployment date.

Next Steps

After the deployment, E-Rate program applicants who need to revise their existing or submit a new FCC Form 498 will need to complete their full entity registration in SAM.gov to obtain a UEI.

If you are already registered in SAM.gov, you have a UEI. To find your UEI, log into SAM.gov and select the Entity Management widget in your Workspace or log in and search Entity Information. Please ensure that your SAM.gov registration is active and the EIN for your UEI, the FCC Registration Number, and the FCC Form 498 numbers match. Once you have completed these steps, add your UEI to your FCC Form 498 ID. **Entities' registrations in SAM.gov require annual renewal or the accounts will be deactivated.** Please ensure that your organization annually renews its SAM.gov registration prior to the expiration date listed in your entity's record in SAM.gov.

If you are not registered in SAM.gov, you will need to register and allow up to six weeks for the registration to be completed for SAM.gov. Once you register with SAM.gov, you will be automatically assigned a UEI and can add your UEI to your FCC Form 498 ID. Even if you don't need to modify your [FCC Form 498 ID](#) immediately, you should go ahead and complete your SAM.gov registration as early as possible, so that you have your UEI when it is required to be used during the second quarter of 2023. USAC will announce the exact timing for this transition in a future News Brief.

If you need help obtaining a UEI or have additional questions, please contact USAC's Customer Service Center, Contributors/Service Providers option, at (888) 641-8722 or visit [SAM.gov](#) for additional information on how to obtain a UEI or register your entity.

New Open Data Tools Are Now Live

Two new open data tools are now live including the [E-Rate Search Commitments](#) tool and the [E-Rate Window Reporting](#) tool. The Search Commitments tool provides commitment data by funding year and E-Rate wave data for FY2016+ and includes easy to use filters, several data visualizations, and a detailed report that can be exported. The Window Reporting tool provides the latest application window data for FY2023 and also includes filters, visualizations, and a detailed report.

E-Rate Pre-Commitment Office Hour Webinar Prerequisites

Materials to review before the training include:

- [E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process Webinar](#)
- [Filing the FCC Form 470 and the Competitive Bidding Process Webinar](#)

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