



Universal Service  
Administrative Co.

E-Rate

## E-Rate News Brief

October 25, 2023

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### E-RATE TIPS:

- **Invoicing in the Schools and Libraries (SL) Legacy systems closes October 30** at 11:59 p.m. ET. The E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) **will be unavailable for all users** from November 3 starting at noon ET to 9 a.m. ET on November 7 for the E-Rate Systems Consolidation cutover. Visit the [E-Rate Systems Consolidation](#) page or read the [October 12, 2023 E-Rate News Brief Special Edition](#) for more details.
- **Applicants: Don't forget to file your FCC Form 486** if you have received a positive funding commitment and your services have started. USAC cannot process invoices for funding year (FY) 2023 services from applicants or service providers without an approved FCC Form 486 on file. Use the [FRN Status tool FY2016+](#) to find your funding request numbers (FRNs) and check the "FCC Form 486 Status" column. For FRNs with a service start date of July 1, 2023, and where the funding commitment decision letter (FCDL) was issued before July 2023, the **deadline to submit the FCC Form 486 is October 30, 2023**.
- **Service Providers: Don't forget to file your FCC Form 473.** Service providers should submit and certify an FY2023 FCC Form 473 (Service Provider Annual Certification) as soon as possible, if you have not already done so. USAC **cannot pay an invoice** from either an applicant (FCC Form 472) or a service provider (FCC Form 474) unless both the FCC Form 486 and the SPAC forms have been certified and approved.
- USAC strongly encourages all service providers to **review and update their FCC Form 498 data** on an annual basis, and revise as necessary, **including general contact, company officer, and banking information**. If you do make updates to your FCC Form 498, you will also need to provide a SAM.gov unique entity identifier (UEI). Go to the [Manage Your 498 ID](#) page or our [UEI bulletin](#) to learn more.
- You can now **register for one or more of our fall training sessions** from the [Webinars](#) page on the USAC website (see [below](#)). All sessions include a Q&A session at the end and will be recorded and posted to the Webinars page so that you can watch a session if you are not able to attend the live

session. You can also submit questions when you register.

- **Tribal Libraries Pilot Program extended for FY2024.** The [Tribal Libraries Pilot Program](#) provides one-on-one assistance to Tribal applicants in applying for and receiving E-Rate support, including Tribal libraries and Tribal college and university (TCU) libraries that also serve as public libraries in their communities. This includes sharing information about program rules and requirements, providing training on how to use the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC), and walking through the competitive bidding and application processes. To learn more about and to join the pilot program, go to the [Tribal Libraries Pilot Program](#) page.
- **USAC held two Open Data webinars in September** with an overview of what Open Data is and how to use it and a session on creating reports and visualizations. View the webinar recordings or slides under [Previous Trainings](#) on the [Webinars](#) page.
- Visit recently updated web content on the following pages: [Urban or Rural Status](#) and [Tribal FAQs](#).

## Commitments for Funding Year (FY) 2023 and FY2022

**FY2023.** USAC released FY2023 Wave 26 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on October 19. As of October 24, FY2023 commitments total over \$2.29 billion.

**FY2022.** USAC released FY2022 Wave 62 FCDLs on October 11. As of October 24, FY2022 commitments total over \$2.8 billion.

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

## Fall 2023 Training Reminder

USAC is offering a series of online Webinar sessions for E-Rate program participants, including Tribal applicants. The one-hour webinars (from 2 - 3 p.m. ET) will be recorded and available on the [Webinars](#) page. You can register to attend the sessions using the event registration links below. Specific training for FY2024 Eligible Services will be scheduled once the FY2024 Eligible Services List is released.

Below is the full list of sessions that are available under the **Upcoming Trainings** section of the E-Rate [Webinars](#) page. The slides and recordings will also be published on the [Webinars](#) page.

## Upcoming Webinars

- **November 7, 2023 E-Rate Post-Commitment Process:** USAC will discuss the E-Rate Post-Commitment Process and other post-commitment activities. Topics include starting services, the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), service substitutions, appeals, and more followed by a Q&A session.
- **November 9, 2023 Invoicing:** This webinar is designed to help E-Rate program participants (applicants and service providers) understand the invoicing process. We will discuss the FCC Form 472 (BEAR Form) and the FCC Form 474 (SPI Form), invoice deadlines, invoicing reviews, and more. This session **will not cover the new Invoicing functionality in EPC.**

## Recordings Available

Below are on-demand recordings and accompanying slides from our fall webinars. To watch a webinar recording, click **Watch** next to the session on the [Webinars](#) page.

- **E-Rate Program Overview (October 3)** - USAC provided a high-level overview of the E-Rate application process from beginning to end and explained basic program concepts for applicants and service providers, followed by a Q&A session.
  - View the [webinar slides](#).
- **E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process (October 5)** - USAC discussed the E-Rate Pre-Commitment process. This included how to get started, competitive bidding, applying for discounts, and Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review, followed by a Q&A session.
  - View the [webinar slides](#).
- **Eligible Services 101 (October 12)** - USAC provided an overview of E-Rate eligible services followed by a Q&A session.
  - View the [webinar slides](#).
- **Category Two Budgets (October 17)** - USAC provided an overview of C2 budgets and C2 budget guidance for FY2024, followed by a Q&A session.
  - View the [webinar slides](#).
- **EPC Administrative Window (October 19)** - USAC discussed the EPC Administrative Window, the period during which applicants can make updates to their profile information in EPC, to prepare for the upcoming FCC Form 471 application filing window, followed by a Q&A session.
  - View the [webinar slides](#).

### Extended Service Delivery Deadlines for Certain FY2022 Funding Requests

In response to the impact of Hurricane Idalia in September, the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) issued an order ([DA 23-805](#)) **extending certain E-Rate service implementation deadlines to September 30, 2024** for E-Rate program participants in the affected areas of Florida and South Carolina **who had non-recurring service deadlines that would have expired September 30, 2023**. The extension was due to the extensive damage to property, facilities, and resources resulting from Hurricane Idalia that made it difficult for some applicants to complete the installation of internal connections and other non-recurring services by the September 30, 2023 deadline for FY2022.

The order does not affect the existing contract end dates (CEDs) between you and your service provider. If you have CEDs that end before the new service delivery deadline (SDD), and you have extended, or will extend, your contract with the service provider, you should submit an [FCC Form 500](#) to request an update to the CED in EPC to match the updated CED with your service provider.

USAC processed these SDD extensions per the FCC order. **Applicants do not need to submit an FCC Form 500 for the SDD change granted by this order to take effect.** However, the FCC Form 500 must be submitted if you are updating the CED as noted above.

You can use the [FRN Status Tool FY2016+](#) in USAC's [Open Data](#) platform to view the current SDD, Invoice Deadline Date (IDD), and CED for any FRN. You can [view the video](#) on how to use the tool to determine your deadlines.

### Tips for the EPC Administrative Window

The FY2024 EPC administrative window opened yesterday, October 24. The EPC administrative window is the period during which applicants can make updates to their entity profile information in EPC to prepare for the upcoming FCC Form 471 application filing window. The administrative window **will close shortly before the FY2024 application filing window opens in early 2024** when applicant entity profiles will be locked.

Here are a few things to consider while you prepare to update your entity profile information in EPC during the administrative window.

## **Updating Student Counts**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were given flexibility to serve all students free meals by USDA. Because of this flexibility, schools were not collecting National School Lunch Program (NSLP) applications, and E-Rate applicants were permitted to use existing enrollment numbers. Because many of those options expired, applicants should update their enrollment and NSLP numbers when the FY2024 administrative window opens.

### **Need to add an entity? Do it now.**

To add a new entity (e.g., an individual school to a school district or a library branch to a library system) to your organization's profile, open a customer service case in EPC or call the Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100. After the administrative window closes, CSC can still create the entity for you, but generally, you must file a [Receipt Acknowledgment Letter \(RAL\) modification request](#) to add it to your organization's profile. However, be sure to read the caveat below about FY2023 RAL modifications and appeals.

### **Have RAL modifications or appeals for FY2023 applications? Submit those before you update your EPC profiles.**

Submit any FY2023 RAL modification requests or FY2023 appeals before you add new entities or new entity subtypes to your organization's profile information. This will allow us to process your FY2023 RAL modification or appeal more quickly.

### **Urban/Rural Designation Updates.**

USAC is in the process of updating the urban-rural classifications for FY2024 in the E-Rate program based on 2020 Census Bureau data and based on FCC program rules. For FY2024, the urban-rural status for some entities will change based on data from your latest FY2023 FCC Form 471 application. Note that the Discount Rate may also change if you are updating student counts for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) for FY2024. The urban-rural change updates were made by USAC on October 24, 2023.

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