Universal Service
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E-Rate

E-Rate News Brief

March 13, 2024

Funding Year (FY) 2024 FCC Form 471 Filing Window Countdown

The Funding Year (FY) 2024 FCC Form 471 application filing window is currently open. The application filing **window closes on Wednesday, March 27, 2024** at 11:59:59 p.m. ET. **Submit your application today so that USAC can begin processing your application!**

Days to window close	**14**
FY2024 FCC Forms 470 filed	**21,865**
FY2024 FCC Forms 471 filed	**16,402**

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

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E-RATE TIPS:

• **Review the FCC Form 471 walkthrough videos**. Recorded video walkthroughs related to the FCC Form 471 are available in the Videos section of the USAC website. Video topics include starting your form, creating funding requests, and certifying your Category One and Category Two FCC Form 471 applications. There are also videos on creating contract records (click **Load More** to view them).

• **The interim SPIN becomes available today, March 13, 2024**. If you don't know your service provider's SPIN (Service Provider Identification Number) or the provider has multiple SPINs and you don't know which to use, you can enter the interim SPIN on your FY2024 FCC Form 471 application funding requests. See the February 2024 E-Rate News Brief for more information.

- If you **plan to request a waiver of the FY2024 application filing window deadline, be sure to *certify and submit* your FCC Form 471 in EPC *before* you file your waiver request** with the FCC. You will receive an out-of-window status notification after you certify your form. If the waiver request is granted, the FCC Form 471 will be treated as timely filed during the filing window.

- **Are you applying for school bus Wi-Fi equipment and services?** These services became eligible starting with FY2024. If you have completed your competitive bidding process and selected the most cost-effective service provider(s), the **next step is to submit and certify the FCC Form 471** during the FY2024 application filing window. Review the details on how to submit these requests in the January 2024 E-Rate News Brief.

- **Legacy FCC Form 470 Tools to Retire April 15**. USAC will decommission two Legacy FCC Form 470 tools on April 15: the View an FCC Form 470 and the Download FCC Form 470 Information tools. The same data is found in the E-Rate FCC Form 470 Download Tool in USAC's Open Data platform, which has easy-to-use filters to locate FCC Form 470 data and Request for Proposal (RFP) documents. Users can create their own custom reports or pull data using an API call via the E-Rate FCC Form 470 Tool Data Set.

- **Visit our updated webpages** including Competitive Bidding and FCC Form 470 FAQs and the In-Person E-Rate Training Events page.

E-RATE INVOICING TIPS:

- **Service Providers: Submit your FCC Form 473**. The FCC Form 473, or Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form, **must be filed each year** by service providers that participate in the E-Rate program **for each SPIN** and for each funding year. To create a new FCC Form 473 SPAC in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC), a full or partial rights user must:

  o Log in to EPC.
  o Select **EPC E-Rate Invoicing** from the shortcuts at the right of the landing page or select the "waffle" icon in the top right corner and click **EPC Invoice**.
  o Under the **My Organizations** tab, select **File EPC FCC Form 473** to the right of the SPIN for which the form should be filed.
  o Select the **Funding Year** for this SPAC (you must have a SPAC for each funding year that you participate).
  o Complete the **Service Provider Information** screen.
  o Certify the form. Review and check all the certifications and check the signature box and click **Certify**.

Service providers can check the status of their FCC Form 473 for a given funding year by opening their organization's summary page in EPC. View the FCC Form 473 (SPAC) Form User Guide if you need more help.

- **Received an Invoicing Service Certification?** USAC sends a service certification form to applicants (for FCC Form 472/BEAR) and service providers (for FCC Form 474/SPI) to confirm that eligible equipment was delivered, or for funding request numbers (FRNs) that include installation, that the eligible equipment was delivered and installed. **Only an authorized representative of the applicant (school/library) with "Full" rights for BEAR/472 permission or the applicant's Account Administrator in EPC is authorized to complete, sign, and send this form to USAC**. The service certification should be read carefully, completed accurately, provide the date that eligible equipment was delivered, and for FRNs that include installation, provide an accurate installation date for the eligible equipment. **Work

Commitments for Funding Year (FY) 2023

FY2023. USAC released FY2023 Wave 46 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on March7. As of March 12, FY2023 commitments total over $2.59 billion.

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

Extended CSC Hours for Final Days of the Application Filing Window

The E-Rate Customer Service Center (CSC) **will be open extended hours before the March 27, 2024 deadline for the close of the FY2024 FCC Form 471 application filing window** to help applicants with last-minute questions and any issues. Call CSC at (888) 203-8100 for assistance.

Here are CSC's extended hours **beginning Saturday, March 23, through Wednesday, March 27** (all times are Eastern Time (E.T.)):

- Saturday, March 23 – 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.

- Sunday, March 24 – 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.

- Monday, March 25 – 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- Tuesday, March 26 – 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- Wednesday, March 27 – 8 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.

Last-Minute Filing Tips for the FCC Form 471 Application Filing Window

In last month's E-Rate News Brief, we provided preparation steps for the FY2024 application filing window and FCC Form 471 tips for first-time filers. Below are additional tips to keep in mind during the last weeks of the FY2024 FCC Form 471 application filing window.

Return to an incomplete FCC Form 471
If you are not finished with a form and you need to exit the form, you can click the **SAVE & CONTINUE** button to save your work on the current page and then exit the browser. EPC will create a task for you in the **My Tasks** list located in the **Tasks** tab on your landing page, that you can use to return to the unfinished form and complete your data entry. If EPC unexpectedly times you out of the system, EPC will also create a task for you to use to return to your form.

We strongly encourage you **not to use the SAVE AND SHARE button that appears at the bottom of the entry screens of your form**. This button will create and send a task to everyone in your organization with authorization, to continue working on the form *except you*.

If you have provided all required information but you are not a full-rights user, you can click the **SEND FOR CERTIFICATION** button in EPC after you review the PDF version of your form to create a task for all full-rights users to be able to access, review, and certify the form.

Certify your FCC Form 471
You can certify the FCC Form 471 if you are a full-rights user for this form. Check with your Account Administrator if you believe you should have these rights but are not able to certify your form. Remember that sending a form to full-rights users in your organization for certification will mean that you will no longer have access to revise the form. You can review the information you provided on a PDF version of the form before you send it for certification, and full-rights users must review that PDF version before they can proceed to certification.

Correct information on the FCC Form 471 after it is certified
After the FCC Form 471 has been certified, **use a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) modification request** to make corrections on the form. This includes entity profile information and any other information on the form. You may also add or remove funding requests via a RAL request. Note that your PIA reviewer may have questions for you about the reason(s) for the changes you request. To learn how to submit modification requests for your FCC Form(s) 471, view the [FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter Modification Guide](#).

Guidance on Advance Installation of Non-Recurring Services
In certain situations, non-recurring services may be installed before FY2024 begins on July 1, 2024. Program rules permit applicants to request E-Rate program discounts for Category One non-recurring charges incurred up to six months prior to the July 1 start of the funding year (i.e., on or after January 1), provided that construction begins after selection of a service provider pursuant to a valid competitive bidding process; a Category One recurring service depends on the installation of the infrastructure; the service start date is on or after the start of the funding year; and no invoices (FCC Form 472 or FCC Form 474) are dated prior to July 1 of the funding year.

Installation of Category Two non-recurring services may begin as early as April 1 prior to the July 1 start of the funding year. Applicants are permitted to place an order for E-Rate Category Two eligible equipment (included on their FY2024 application) prior to April 1, 2024, provided that the equipment is not delivered to the applicant before April 1, 2024. No invoices (FCC Form 472 or FCC Form 474) can be certified prior to July 1 of the funding year.

What To Do if You Missed the February 28 FCC Form 470 Deadline for FY2024

February 28, 2024 was the last day to certify and submit your FY2024 FCC Form 470, wait the required minimum 28-day period, and certify and submit your FY2024 FCC Form 471 before the application filing window closes on March 27, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. E.T.

For applicants who have not yet certified and submitted their FCC Form 470, you may still take the following steps:

1. **Certify and submit your FCC Form 470 for FY2024 as soon as you are ready**. Be sure to upload any RFP documents you have to your form. We suggest that you review the [FCC Form 470 Filing](#) webpage for more information.

2. **Wait at least 28 days before you choose a service provider, sign a contract, and submit and certify your FCC Form 471**. If you are required to wait more than 28 days due to your state or local procurement rules or regulations, or competitive bidding requirements, be sure to follow those requirements. As a reminder, ensure you follow all competitive bidding requirements and wait the required 28-day minimum period before awarding a contract. The [FCC Form 470/Competitive Bidding](#)

infographic contains reminders to help ensure your success in the E-Rate program. Additional resources include Competitive Bidding FAQs, 28-Day Waiting Period, and the E-Rate Document Retention page (see article below).

3. **Certify and submit your FCC Form 471**. You will receive a notification that your form is considered out-of-window.

4. **Request a waiver of the FCC Form 471 application filing window deadline** with the FCC, providing details of the circumstances that led to your late filing. You can refer to the **Submitting Window Waiver Requests** section of the FCC Form 471 Filing page on the USAC website.

5. **If the FCC approves your waiver request, USAC will move your FCC Form 471 to an in-window status** and add it to the queue for Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review. If the FCC denies your waiver request, your FY2024 FCC Form 471 application will not be reviewed or processed by USAC.

E-Rate Program Document Retention Requirements

We would like to remind E-Rate participants of the requirement to retain program documentation.

Pursuant to program rules, all program participants are required to retain receipt and delivery records relating to pre-bidding, bidding, contracts, application process, invoices, provision of services, and any other documentation demonstrating compliance with program rules for **a period of at least ten years** after the latter of the last day of the applicable funding year, or the service delivery deadline for the funding request

Applicants

Documents to retain as part of the competitive bidding process include but are not limited to:

- The FCC Form 470.

- .The request for proposals (RFP), if one is issued, and any RFP documents.

- Questions from potential bidders and your answers.

- Copies of winning **and losing bids** (including any disqualified bids). Note that service providers are not required to retain losing bids.

- The final bid evaluation matrix (or matrices, if you have multiple reviewers) and any supporting documentation of your bid evaluation.

- If there is a restriction that prevents services and costs from being made public, a copy of the precise cite to the law, statute, local rule, or court order identifying the restriction.

- The contract, if one is signed.

Service Providers

In addition to invoicing forms and post-commitment change requests, service providers should also retain copies of policies and procedures, including the following:

- Policies and procedures for ensuring beneficiaries are charged the lowest corresponding price (Lowest Corresponding Price (LCP) compliance).

- Policies and procedures for ensuring employee compliance with the FCC [gift rules](#).

- Policies and procedures for ensuring compliance with the FCC document retention rules.

- Conflict of interest policy ensuring independence between the service provider's employees and program beneficiaries.

- Policies and procedures for ensuring beneficiaries are accurately billed and USAC is accurately invoiced for E-Rate eligible services.

Go to the [E-Rate Document Retention](#) page and the [E-Rate Program List of Documents to Retain for Audits and to Show Compliance with Program Rules](#) page to learn more.

2024 Training and Outreach

USAC is coming to an event near you in 2024. Below are some events we will attend in the next few months. Visit the [In-Person E-Rate Training Events](#) page to learn more about the events we'll be attending where we can answer your E-Rate questions.

Conferences

- Visit USAC at the **Computers in Libraries 2024 Conference** March 12-14, 2024 in Arlington, Virginia (Booth 117). [Event Link](#)

- Visit USAC at the **Public Library Association (PLA) 2024 Conference** April 3-5, 2024 in Columbus, Ohio (Booth 1022). [Event Link](#)

- Visit USAC at the **Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) 2024 Conference** April 8-10, 2024 in Miami, Florida (Booth). [Event Link](#)

Webinars

Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) Review and Selective Review Process Webinar
April 18, 2024
2 p.m. to 3 p.m. ET

[Register](#)

This webinar will provide E-Rate participants with an overview of the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA), Selective Review, and the funding decision processes.

2024 In-Person Training

In addition to fall virtual trainings, USAC plans to hold four in-person E-Rate trainings this fall. More details and registration information will be provided in a future news brief and on the USAC website. Tentative locations and dates are below:

- **E-Rate Training**: September 17, 2024 in Dallas, Texas

- **E-Rate Training**: October 7, 2024 in Washington, D.C.

- **E-Rate Training**: October 29, 2024 in Fayetteville, Arkansas

- **Tribal-Focused E-Rate Training**: November 12, 2024 in Palm Springs, California

FY2024 Training Recordings and Slides Available on Demand

USAC conducted a series of Question and Answer (Q&A) webinar sessions during the FY2024 application filing window period focused on E-Rate topics related to FCC Forms 470 and 471. You can view the recordings on the Webinars page, by clicking the **Watch** button next to the session.

- **FY2024 E-Rate Eligible Services Q&A Session** (January 18, 2024)

USAC provided an overview of the FY2024 E-Rate eligible services and discussed the FY2024 Eligible Services List (ESL). View slides.

- **Competitive Bidding (FCC Form 470) Q&A Session** (January 23, 2024)

E-Rate subject matter experts walked through the competitive bidding process and the FCC Form 470 with a focus on the FCC Form 470 Guiding Statements Document for all experience levels. View slides.

- **Service Provider Selection (FCC Form 471) Q&A Session** (January 25, 2024)

E-Rate subject matter experts provided an overview of how to apply for program support on the FCC Form 471 for applicants of all experience levels. View slides.

- **Pre-Commit (FCC Forms 470, 471, ESL, etc.) E-Rate Q&A Session** (February 22, 2024)

E-Rate experts answered questions about the competitive bidding process, Category Two budgets, and the Eligible Services List. View slides.