

[Back](#)



Universal Service  
Administrative Co.

E-Rate

## E-Rate News Brief

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### Contents

- [E-Rate Tips](#)
- [Funding Year \(FY\) 2024 Commitments](#)
- [FY2025 FCC Form 471 Application Filing Window Opens January 15, 2025](#)
- [E-Rate Program Updates](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about Wi-Fi Hotspot Devices for Off-Premises Use](#)
- [Customer Service Center Holiday Hours](#)
- [Winter Deferral Period Starts December 20, 2024](#)
- [FY2023 Invoicing Reminders](#)

#### E-RATE TIPS:

- **Don't forget to update your E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) profiles.** All applicants can now review their profiles and make any additional updates for changes that occurred after USAC's review of their Funding Year (FY) 2024 FCC Forms 471. As in the past, the [EPC Administrative Window](#) to update profiles will close – and the applicant profiles will be locked – shortly before the FY2025 application filing window opens. Go to the [EPC Administrative Window learning module](#) to learn more.
- **FY2025 Eligible Services List Available.** The FCC Wireline Communications Bureau (WCB) released the FY2025 Eligible Services List (ESL) ([DA 24-1104](#)) on October 25, 2024. You can review the FY2025 ESL on the [Eligible Services List](#) page to learn which services are eligible for E-Rate discounts for the upcoming funding year.
- **New Fields Added to E-Rate FRN Status Tool.** USAC added the following fields to the [E-Rate FRN Status Tool FY2016+](#) tool: FCC Form 470 Application number, Old FCC Form 470 Number, FRN Original Requested Total Pre-Discount Costs, Was FCC Form 470 Posted?, and the Original Requested Discount Percentage.

- **Category Two (C2) Budget Management Guide Updated:** USAC updated the [FY2021-FY2025 Category Two \(C2\) Budget Management Guide](#) to include expanded information on how to check your available C2 funding, determine if you have any expired C2 funding, and how to submit an FCC Form 500 to reduce expired or unused commitments and make that funding available for FY2025. The [Category Two \(C2\) budget tool](#) provides data on the FY2021-FY2025 C2 budget cycle if you want to view your C2 budget information. It is available on the [Tools](#) page along with a [video](#) on how to use the tool.
- **Join USAC's January Tribal Teleconference,** held in collaboration with the E-Rate team. USAC will provide **an overview of the E-Rate Competitive Bidding (FCC Form 470) process** and provide time for Q&A as the FY2025 application filing window approaches. Please join us on **Tuesday, January 14, 2025**, at 4 p.m. E.T. – [Register](#).
- **Check out the revamped E-Rate Tools page.** USAC has streamlined its [E-Rate Tools](#) page to explain the differences between the available datasets and tools, categorized by their function (e.g., funding tools, entity tools, invoicing tools, etc.). USAC also added example use cases for each tool so you can learn which tool would be best to answer your E-Rate questions.

## Funding Year (FY) 2024 Commitments

**FY2024.** USAC released FY2024 Wave 34 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on December 12. As of December 17, FY2024 commitments total over \$2.47 billion.

On the date that FCDLs are issued, you can access your FCDL notification from the **Notifications** section of your landing page in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC).

You can use the [E-Rate Search Commitments Tool](#) to look up prior-year commitment data.

## Funding Year (FY) 2025 FCC Form 471 Application Filing Window Opens January 15, 2025

The Funding Year (FY) 2025 FCC Form 471 application **filing window will open on Wednesday, January 15, 2025**, at noon E.T. and **will close on Wednesday, March 26, 2025**, at 11:59 p.m. E.T. In addition, the EPC Administrative Window will close, Thursday, January 9, 2025.

**Wednesday, February 26, 2025 is the last date that you can submit and certify an FY2025 FCC Form 470 and still wait the required minimum 28-day period** before submitting and certifying your FY2025 FCC Form 471 by March 26, 2025, the last date of the FY2025 application filing window.

All applicants can now review their EPC profiles and make additional updates for changes that occurred after USAC's review of their FY2024 FCC Forms 471 (see Tip above). The [EPC Administrative Window](#) will close – and the applicant profiles will be locked – **on January 9, 2025** before the FY2025 application filing window opens January 15, 2025. View the EPC Administrative Window [webinar slides](#) to learn more.

## E-Rate Program Updates

We want to make you aware of recent program updates that will be applied to FY2025 so you can start preparing for the FY2025 E-Rate FCC Form 471 application filing window that will open January 15, 2025.

## Wi-Fi Hotspots/Wireless Mobile Internet Services for FY2025

The FCC released a report and order ([FCC 24-76](#)) July 29, 2024 that permits eligible schools and libraries to receive E-Rate support for the off-premises use of Wi-Fi hotspots and wireless mobile Internet services by students, school staff, and library patrons.

The FY2025 FCC Form 470 includes options to request bids for Wi-Fi hotspot devices and wireless mobile Internet access services for these devices. See the **C1: Wi-Fi Hotspots for Off Premises Use (Equipment)** and the **C1: Wi-Fi Hotspots for Off Premises Use (Data Transmission)** sections of the [How to File an FCC Form 470 learning module](#) for more information. Learn more about how to request E-Rate support for Wi-Fi hotspots by reviewing the August 2024 Wi-Fi Hotspot Eligibility [webinar](#) and [slides](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions about Wi-Fi Hotspot Devices for Off-Premises Use

**Q.** Can applicants apply for more wireless Internet access lines than Wi-Fi hotspot devices or must they request an equal number of lines and devices? What if the applicant already bought Wi-Fi hotspots through other means (e.g., Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) or other funding sources)?

**A.** All Wi-Fi hotspot equipment requests must have an associated line of service on the application. However, applicants who purchased Wi-Fi hotspot devices through ECF, or another funding source, can receive E-Rate funding for the Internet access service plans to use these previously purchased devices.

**Q.** Can an applicant request more Wi-Fi hotspot devices than wireless Internet access lines just in case the devices are lost, stolen, or stop working?

**A.** No. Applicants **cannot** request more devices than lines in anticipation of potential loss/breakage. Replacement devices for the same line may be purchased using non-E-Rate funding sources or replacement devices can be requested in the next funding year.

**Q.** Can applicants request Wi-Fi hotspot devices and pair them with private network services or wireless Internet access purchased via another funding source?

**A.** No. The purchase of devices receiving services through a private network or other funding sources is ineligible for E-Rate support. Only Wi-Fi hotspots to be used with commercially available mobile wireless Internet access services are eligible.

**Q.** Do we have to purchase all of our Wi-Fi hotspot devices/lines of service at once or can we stagger the purchases based on student or library patron needs?

**A.** Applicants can stagger delivery of devices and/or lines approved on the FCC Form 471 throughout the year. Applicants do not have to take receipt of all lines and devices purchased through the E-Rate program at the same time. However, applicants are reminded that the funding year ends on June 30 and FY2025 recurring services cannot be delivered after the funding year has ended.

More Wi-Fi Hotspots FAQs are available on the [Eligible Services FAQ](#) page.

## Customer Service Center Holiday Hours

The Customer Service Center (CSC) provides customer service across USAC programs with specialized agents trained to answer your E-Rate program questions. At the end of December, CSC will be reducing its open hours around the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

CSC will be open during its customary hours through Tuesday, December 24 (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. E.T.) as well as December 26 and December 31.

CSC, however, will be closed over the next two weeks on:

- Wednesday, December 25, 2024 - CLOSED
- Wednesday, January 1, 2025 - CLOSED

**CSC will resume its customary hours** starting at 8 a.m. E.T. **on Thursday, January 2, 2025.**

### **Winter Deferral Period Starts December 20, 2024**

Many E-Rate program participants are unavailable during the winter holiday season, and USAC recognizes that participants may need additional time to respond to requests for information. Winter deferral extends from the Friday before Christmas Day through the Friday following New Year's Day.

During our annual winter deferral period - **Friday, December 20, 2024 through Friday, January 3, 2025** - USAC will only continue reviews of forms and requests where documentation was received or where participants respond to information requests sent in the EPC.

If USAC does not receive a response during this period, the form or request will be placed in a deferred status until January 6, 2025. However, we will be reviewing applications during the winter deferral period, if we have answers to our questions. For those of you who can respond to our questions, please do so. This will allow us to continue reviewing applications and issue funding decisions more quickly.

### **FY2023 Invoicing Reminders**

There are two important invoice deadlines for FY2023 recurring and non-recurring services coming up early in 2025. We are reminding you now to take the necessary steps to file and certify your invoices (for non-recurring services) on or before these deadlines or request a one-time 120-day invoicing deadline extension (for recurring services).

The deadlines are generally:

- **January 28, 2025 for FY2023 non-recurring services.** Applicants and service providers must certify their invoices or ask for an [invoice deadline extension](#) by this date.
- **February 25, 2025 for FY2023 recurring services, if the applicant or service provider requested and received an invoice deadline extension of the original October 28, 2024 invoice deadline.** Applicants and service providers must certify their invoices by this date, as USAC cannot grant a second invoice deadline extension.

Applicants and service providers who have not completed the invoicing process for their FY2023 recurring services should gather the customer bills and other documents now that they will need to accurately invoice USAC.

Regardless of the invoicing mode, service providers must file their FCC Form 473 (Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Forms) in EPC for FY2023 before any invoicing can occur. Service providers are reminded that they are required to file an annual SPAC form pursuant to section 54.504(f) of the FCC's rules. You can verify this by locating the record for your service provider in the [E-Rate Service Provider Download](#) tool. The funding years for which the service provider has filed a SPAC Form are listed in the **FCC Form 473 SPAC Filed** column. See **Module 2: File and FCC Form 473** in the [EPC Invoicing for Service Providers](#) learning module.

If you are a service provider filing an FCC Form 474 (Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Form), you must have billed the applicant for its **non-discount share of costs of the eligible services and equipment**. There is a presumption that your customer (the applicant) will pay your bill within 90 days after receipt of the invoice.

If you are an applicant filing an FCC Form 472 (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form):

- File and certify an [FCC Form 498](#) if you have not already done so. You must have certified – and USAC must have reviewed and approved – an FCC Form 498. Be sure to follow up with the required documentation (canceled check, bank statement, or similar document) that verifies your bank account information. Call USAC at (888) 641-8722 and choose option 4 (contributors) if you have questions.
- You must have paid the service provider in full for the cost of the eligible services and equipment.
- You must have filed an [FCC Form 486](#) to notify USAC that services have started.
- Your service provider(s) must have completed their FCC Form 473 (Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Forms) for FY2023 as noted above.

Here are some resources for additional assistance in filing these forms:

### **Applicants**

- [FCC Form 472 Filing](#) for a description of the BEAR Form filing process
- [How to File FCC Form 472 in EPC](#)
- [E-Rate Invoicing Requirements Guide](#) (PDF)
- [EPC Invoicing for Applicants](#) (learning module)
- [Obtain an Applicant 498 ID](#) page
- [FCC Form 498 Applicant User Guide](#) for applicants completing the FCC Form 498 in EPC

### **Service Providers**

- [FCC Form 473](#) (Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form)
- [FCC Form 474 Filing](#) for a description of the SPI Form filing process
- [EPC invoicing for Service Providers](#) (learning module)
- [How to File FCC Form 474 in EPC](#)
- [Electronic Invoicing \(eSPI\) Process](#) including Additional Resources

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[Back](#)