In-Person E-Rate Training

September 24, 2026

Access Today's Training Materials

Housekeeping:

- Beverages are allowed in the meeting room
- Restrooms are to the right when exiting the meeting room
- Our first break will be at approximately 10:30 a.m.

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Today's Agenda

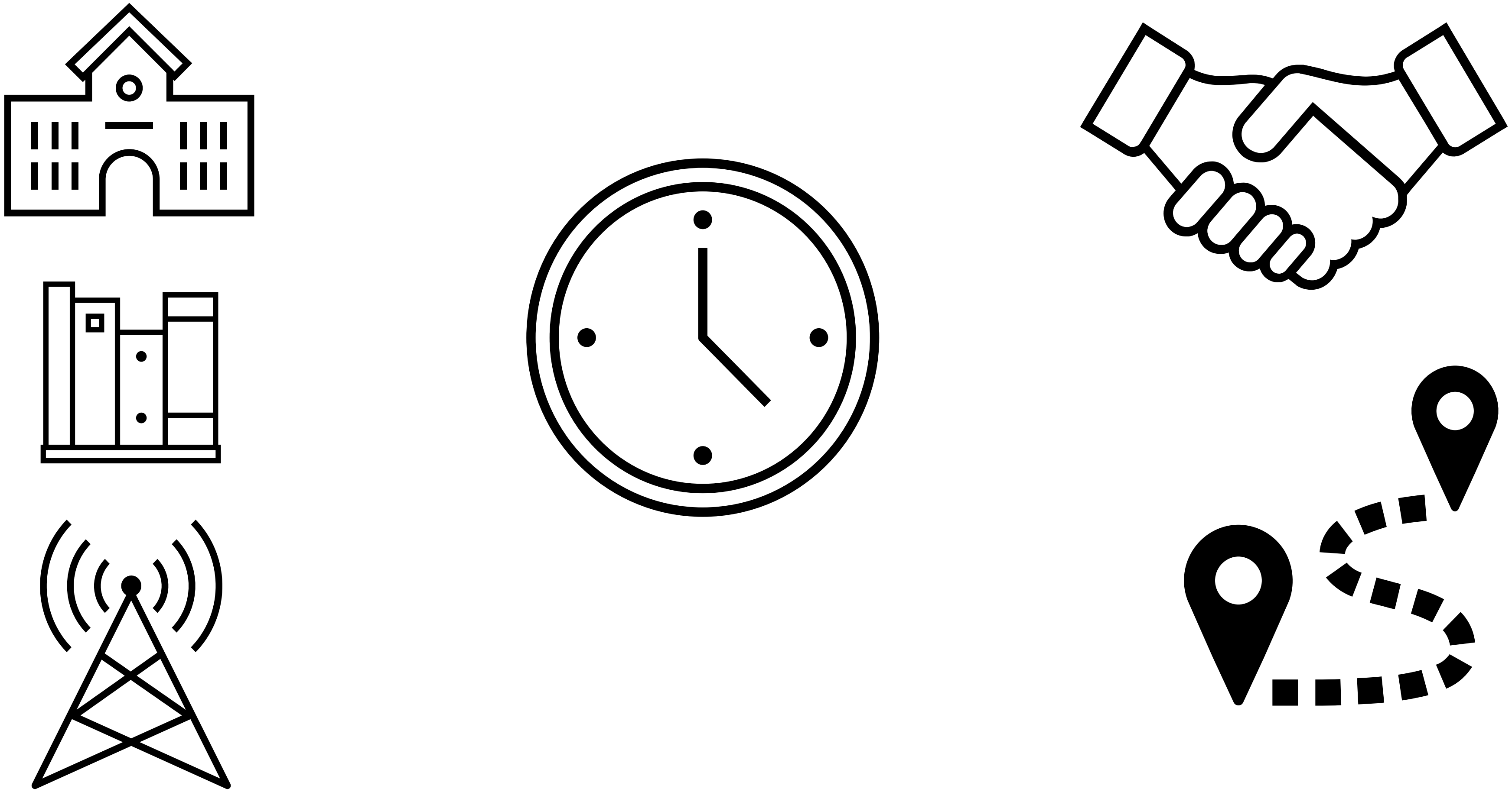
Topic	Presenter	Time*	Details
Introduction	Mattew Baker	8:30-8:35	Welcome and house-keeping items
Program FY2026/2027 Program Updates	Craig Davis	8:35-9:25	E-Rate updates for FCC Form 498 and SAM.gov, Invoicing and FCC Form 471, Competitive Bidding Portal, sunsetting FCC Form 486.
Competitive Bidding (FCC Form 470)	Shawn Jensen	9:25-10:30	CB and FCC Form 470 overview, SP role, contracts, RFPs, Vendor communications, requirements for leased dark fiber and self-provisioned networks, evaluation matrix, CB exemptions.
Break		10:30-10:40	
Resource Spotlight: eLMs	Allison Kahan	10:40-10:50	What are eLMs, where do you find them and how can you get the most out of them.
Application (FCC Form 471)	Bernie Manns	10:50-11:50	FCC Form 471 application overview and requesting funding, application review process, and funding commitments.
Lunch		11:50-1:00	

Available for Public Use

Today's Agenda (Continued)

Lunch		11:50-1:00	
Resource Spotlight: Webinars	Allison Kahan	1:00-1:10	What are webinars, where do you find them and how can you get the most out of them.
Improving E-Rate	E-Rate Staff	1:10-1:50	A listening session for attendees to share what’s going well, how E-Rate can improve program administration, and answer your questions.
E-Rate Audit and Assurance Processes	Latrice Jones	1:50-2:30	Audit overview, what happens during an audit, what will be asked of the program participant, general timeline.
Registration Question Submission Review	All SMEs	2:30-2:50	E-Rate SMEs will review the questions training participants submitted with their registration.
Break		2:50-3:00	
Resource Spotlight: Website	Allison Kahan	3:00-3:10	What resource are on the website, where can you find them and how can you get the most out of them.
Invoicing	Pam Lloyd	3:10-3:55	Invoicing overview, preparing to Invoice, filing an invoice, invoice reviews, record retention and Open Data, and key takeaways.
Closing Remarks	Craig Davis	3:55-4:00	Thank you for joining us!

Getting to Know You



Program Overview

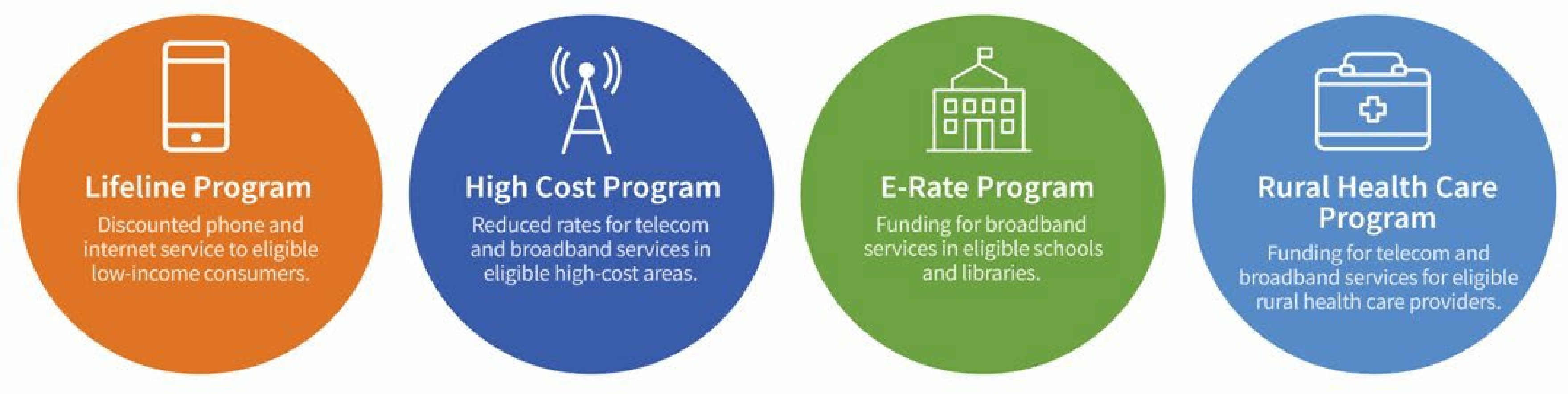
Agenda

- Program Overview
- E-Rate Tools and Resources
- E-Rate Process
- Funding Year 2026: Updates and Reminders
- Program Compliance

Program Overview

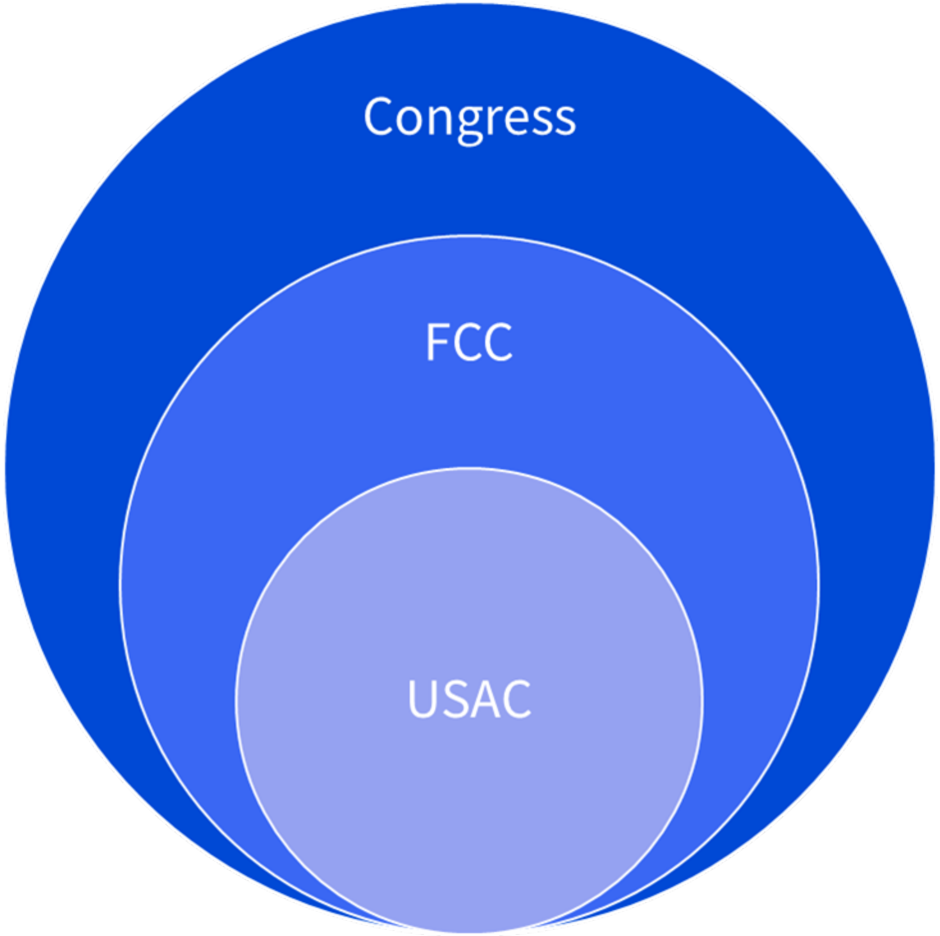
Who We Are: Universal Service Administrative Company

- The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as the permanent administrator of the USF and its four programs.
- The Universal Service Fund (USF): Exists to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity service.



Who Makes the Rules?

- Congress enacted the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which directed the FCC to establish the E-Rate program and the other USF programs.
- The FCC sets rules and policies for the program and gives direction to USAC.
- USAC is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the E-Rate program.



E-Rate Program Overview

Provides funding to help schools and libraries obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

FY2026 Program Cap **$5.2B**

Eligible Applicants

Public and private schools (K-12), libraries, and groups of schools and libraries (e.g., consortia, school districts, library systems), as well as Tribal schools, libraries, and Tribal college and university (TCU) libraries that also serve as a public library.

Eligible Services

Schools and libraries are eligible for discounts between 20% and 90% of the costs of eligible equipment and services. The applicant pays the remaining share (e.g., a 90% applicant pays $100 on a $1,000 request). *Discount varies based on the school or library's level of poverty, urban/rural status, and the type of service.

Category 1

Services that support connectivity to schools and libraries. For example, data transmission and internet access service, including special construction services for network builds.

Category 2

Services that support connectivity within schools and libraries. This includes internal connections (e.g., routers, cabling, or other equipment needed for a Wi-Fi network); managed internal broadband services (MIBS), and basic maintenance of internal connections (BMIC).

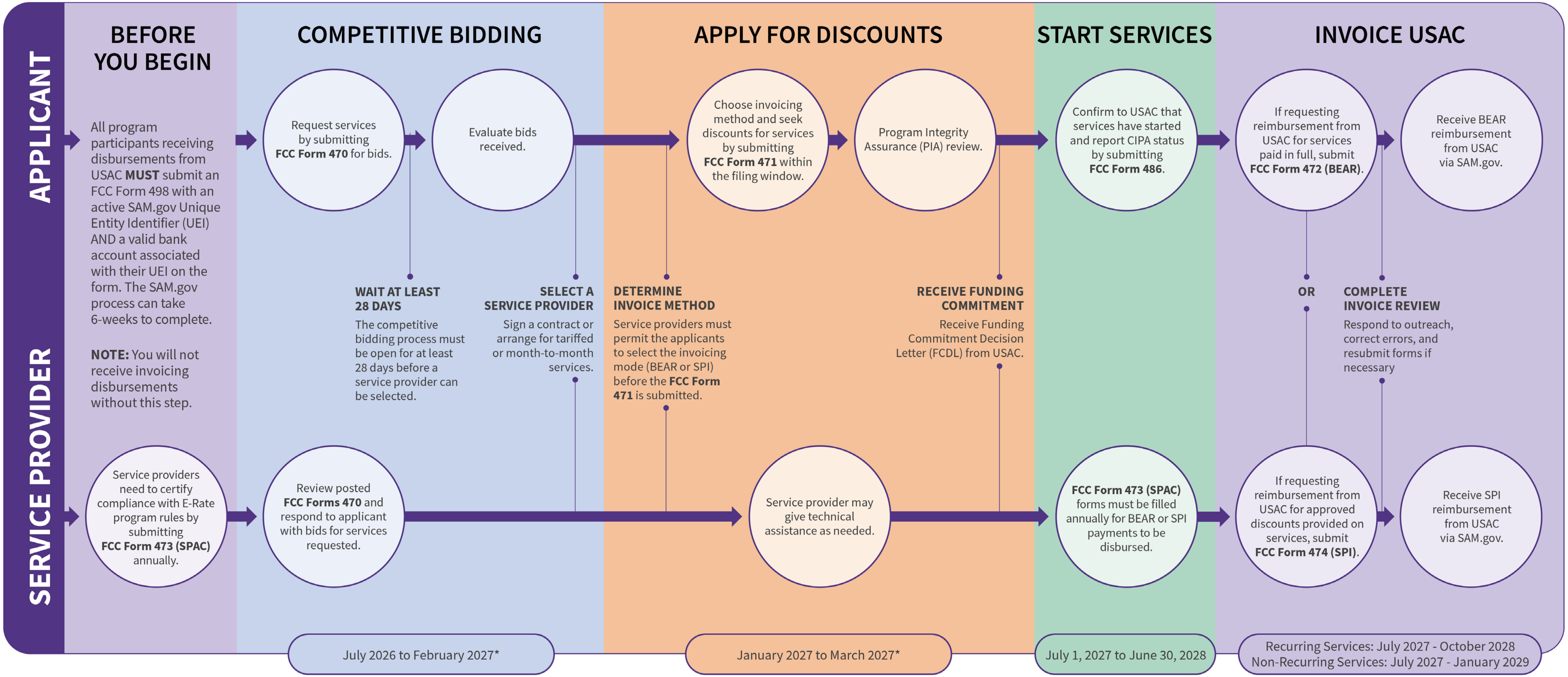
Top C1 Purchases:

- Leased lit fiber
- Internet access provided over fiber or copper
- Commercially available internet access
- Cable provider internet
- Satellite internet

Top C2 Purchases:

- Internal Connections (IC): Cabling, routers, switches, modems, wireless access points, right to use licenses
- Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC): Repair and upkeep of eligible IC
- Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS): Managed Wi-Fi agreements

The E-Rate Application Process: FY2027



* Date ranges reflect a typical timeline and are subject to change.

Program Updates and Reminders

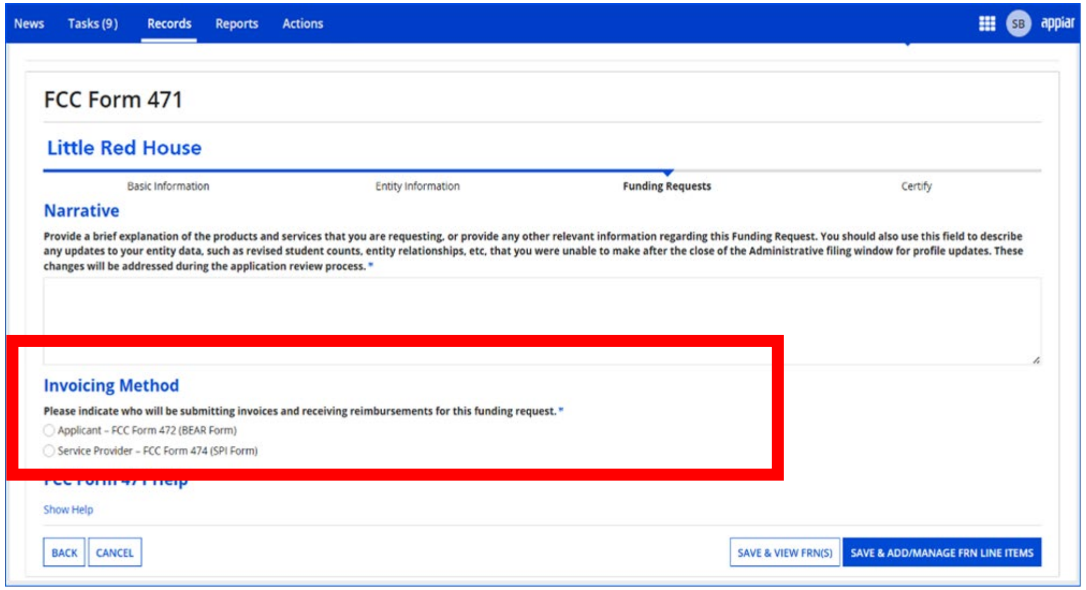
Program Updates 2026 and 2027

- Invoicing Changes
- FY2026 SAM.gov and FCC Form 498 Changes
- Competitive Bidding Portal
- Sunsetting FCC Form 486
- Transitioning Services
- Eligible Services List Funding Year 2026 Reminders
- Eligible Services List Funding Year 2027

Invoicing Changes

How to Select Your FY2026 Invoicing Method

- A new BEAR/SPI selection has been added to the FY2026 E-Rate FCC Form 471 application below the Narrative textbox.
- If you are copying an FRN from a previous funding year that does not have the invoicing method assigned, you will be prompted to select one.
- Applicants should notify their service providers of the invoicing method early in the process of preparing the funding requests.



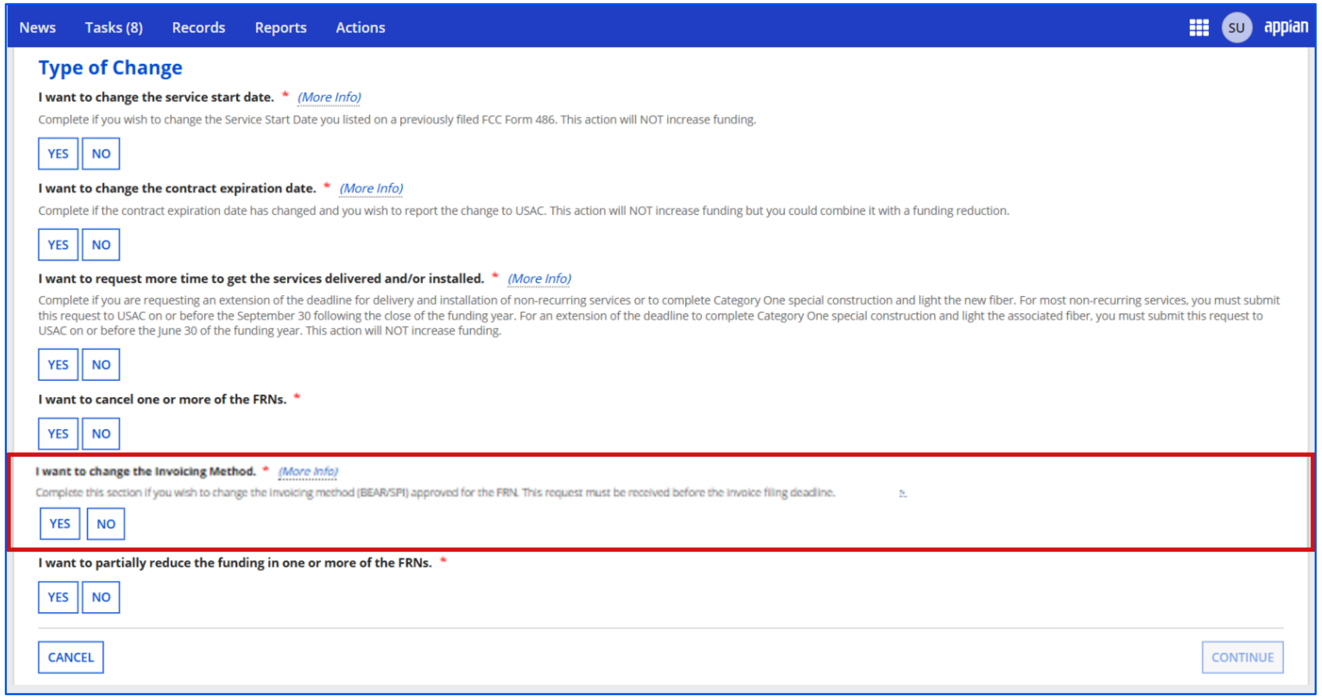
How to Modify Your FY2026 Invoicing Method

Before receiving a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL):

- Submit a RAL Modification Request during the review of your FCC Form 471 application.

After receiving an FCDL:

- Submit an FCC Form 500 using the new "Invoicing Method" change request.
- This change request must be submitted before any invoice is submitted for the FRN.



FCC Order 26-30

FCC Order 26-30

On April 30th 2026, the FCC released order 26-30 establishing:

- Additional invoice deadline flexibility.
- Changes to cost allocation.
- 2028 will see the implementation of:
  - Competitive Bidding Portal
  - FCC Form 486 CIPA confirmation moving to FCC Form 471

Competitive Bidding Portal

Beginning in funding year (FY) 2028, USAC will manage a Competitive Bidding Portal where:

- Applicants will upload bid evaluations and vendor selection documentation, including contract(s), after selecting service providers.
- The portal be used for competitive bidding communications, with exceptions based on local/state law requirements.
- The portal serve as a document repository for applicants and service providers, which will reduce recordkeeping burdens.
- Stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide feedback during the testing phase.
- USAC will update users via our News Brief as we are informed of changes.

Sunsetting FCC Form 486

- Funding Year 2028 will phase out the standalone filing requirement for FCC Form 486.
- Required CIPA compliance certifications will be integrated upstream into the FCC Form 471 application process.
- Applicants must continue to meet standard Form 486 deadlines (120 days from the service start date or the Funding Commitment Decision Letter date, whichever is later) until the phase-out is complete.

Invoicing Changes

Applicants and service providers can now:

- Request a single 120-day extension of the original invoice filing deadline if the request is made within 15 days of the original invoice filing deadline.
  - Instructions to make this request can be found here.
- Have a one-time, 60-day grace period to resubmit corrected versions of invoices that were timely filed before the invoice filing deadline but rejected by USAC after the invoicing deadline.
  - The 60-day period to resubmit a corrected invoice starts the day after you get a USAC decision denying or reducing your payment.
- For cost allocations, the FCC clarified that the ancillary use presumption explained in FCC 23-56 applies to all Category One (C1) services including data transmission services, wide area network services, ethernet, etc.

Cost Allocation

- For cost allocations, the FCC clarified that the ancillary use presumption explained in FCC 23-56 applies to all Category One (C1) services including data transmission services, wide area network services, ethernet, etc.
  - e.g. if at least 90% of an applicant's requested recurring C1 service will be used for an eligible purpose during the funding year, the remaining ineligible use of the C1 service at eligible locations will be presumed to be ancillary and cost allocation is not required.
- USAC procedures have been updated to ensure this presumption is applied to all C1 services.

FY2026 SAM.gov and FCC Form 498 Changes

FY2026 SAM.gov and FCC Form 498 Changes

- USAC will begin using SAM.gov banking information to pay invoices.
- Service providers and BEAR invoicing method (FCC Form 472) participants must have:
  - An active SAM.gov account with a valid bank account associated
  - A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) on their FCC Form 498
- Invoices can be submitted, but will not be disbursed until these requirements are met.
- Because the SAM.gov registration process can take up to six weeks, USAC recommends starting **as soon as possible**.
- For more information, visit USAC's SAM.gov and UEI Requirement webpage and How to File an FCC Form 498 for Applicants.

Transitioning Services

Transition of Services Changes

- E-Rate will create a process for applicants that are transitioning services to file a post-commitment request that changes.
  - Service start date
  - Service end date
- The applicant must meet certain criteria.
- This process will require form changes and will go into effect in a future funding year after approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Transition of Services Changes: Increasing Post-Commitment Funding

E-Rate may approve a post-commitment increase if the applicant:

- Filed partial funding year requests for funding from both service providers
  - (or service offerings, in the case of a transition to a different service from the same service provider)
- Indicated the following on the FCC Form 471
  - best estimates of the transition dates indicated
  - the requests were for a transition of service
  - if there are available funds below the E-Rate program funding cap

Eligible Services List Updates 2026

Eligible Services List Updates 2026

FCC FY2026 ESL BMIC Update

FCC FY2026 ESL BMIC Update

The FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) released the FY2026 eligible services list (ESL) Order (DA 25-1069) on December 17, 2025.

- Treat all currently eligible software- or remote-based services, including bug fixes, security patches, software-based technical assistance, and configuration changes the same and have applicants request all software- and remote-based services with the internal connections equipment that they support.
- The Order permits applicants that had sought funding for software-based BMIC services on a prorated basis in prior funding years to request discounts on the remainder of the contract in FY2026 or continue requesting pro-rated support.
- It also clarifies that applicants that seek support for software- or remote-based services as internal connections in FY2026 that were competitively bid as BMIC services are not violating the competitive bidding rules.

FCC FY2026 ESL BMIC Update Cont.

- **Amending the entries for "Eligible Broadband Internal Connections"** to include software-or remote-based services, including bug fixes, security patches, software-based technical assistance, and configuration changes.
- **Amending the bullets listed under "Basic Maintenance of Eligible Broadband Internal Connections"** to limit configuration changes to those performed in person and deletes "Basic technical support including online and telephone-based technical support" and "Software upgrades and patches including bug fixes and security patches."
- **Amending the language in "eligibility limitations for basic maintenance"** to delete language related to bug fixes, security patches, and technical support.
- Applicants would request all software-based and remote-based services with the internal connections equipment that they support.

Eligible Services List 2027

Eligible Services List (ESL) FY2027

- The Eligible Services List (ESL) for each funding year provides guidance on the eligibility of products and services under the E-Rate program.
- Please monitor the FCC website for any updates on the FY 2027 ESL.
- Updates will also be included in the E-Rate News Brief.
- Prior funding year Eligible Services Lists can be found here.

FCC Form 473 Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form

- Service providers are required to file a SPAC Form to certify their compliance with E-Rate program rules.
- FCC rules require service providers to annually submit a SPAC Form for each Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) for **every funding year** that they participate in the E-Rate program. *See* 47 C.F.R. § 54.504(f).
- **TIMING:** Service providers must file their SPAC Form before any FCC Forms 472 (BEAR) or FCC Forms 474 (SPI) invoices can be processed and paid by USAC.
- Service providers can file a SPAC Form in EPC after the FCC Form 471 application filing window opens for the upcoming funding year and should do so before the end of the applicable funding year (i.e., June 30th). Applicants should contact their service provider if the form has not been filed by the end of the funding year (i.e., June 30). Service providers who fail to file the SPAC form and prevent an applicant from timely filing their BEAR forms may be referred to the FCC EB for further action (see DA-25-394).
- If an applicant's service provider went out of business, you may be eligible for relief under order (see DA-25-394), please contact USAC's Customer Service Center (CSC) for assistance.
- To view the status of the SPAC for any given funding year, please use the E-Rate FRN Status Tool 2016+ in Open Data.

Program Compliance

Document Retention

- Applicants and service providers are required to retain documentation that demonstrates compliance with the statutory or regulatory requirements for all E-Rate program purchases of equipment and services **for a period of at least 10 years** after the latter of the last day of the applicable funding year *or* the service delivery deadline for the funding request.
- Winning service providers must retain records related to the purchase and delivery of E-Rate eligible equipment, signed and executed contracts, bidding information, invoices, provision of services, and other matters relating to equipment and services.
- For example, for recurring internet access service for FY2026, both the applicant and the service provider must retain all records until **at least** June 30, 2037.

Document Retention (cont.)

- Keep all records such as:
  - Request for Proposal documents
  - Winning and losing bids
  - Vendor correspondence
  - Evaluation matrices
  - Documentation and memos of zero or one bid received (if applicable)
  - Other competitive bidding documentation
  - Asset and Service Inventories
- Records can be kept electronically: Use file names and folder names that are specific and descriptive to help you locate them more easily.
- The Document Retention List is available in the Resources section of the USAC website.

Protecting the USF and E-Rate Program

As we focus on preventing fraud, waste, and abuse, it is **extremely important** to take document retention seriously, ensure compliance with program rules, and avoid the appearance of fraudulent activity.

Beneficiaries must comply with program rules and provide USAC, as well as the FCC, with full and correct information, upon request.

- E-Rate is a federal program established by the FCC under 47 C.F.R. Part 54
- Violations of E-Rate program rules, certifications, and/or the United States Code (U.S.C.) are subject to criminal prosecution and financial recovery.

In our role as stewards of the E-Rate program, USAC must:

- Process and evaluate information received from program participants and universal service fund contributors.
- Conduct audits to ensure that funds are being used properly.
- Support investigations by law enforcement for E-Rate and USF.

Learn more on the Program Integrity webpage.

Questions?

FCC Form 470 and Competitive Bidding

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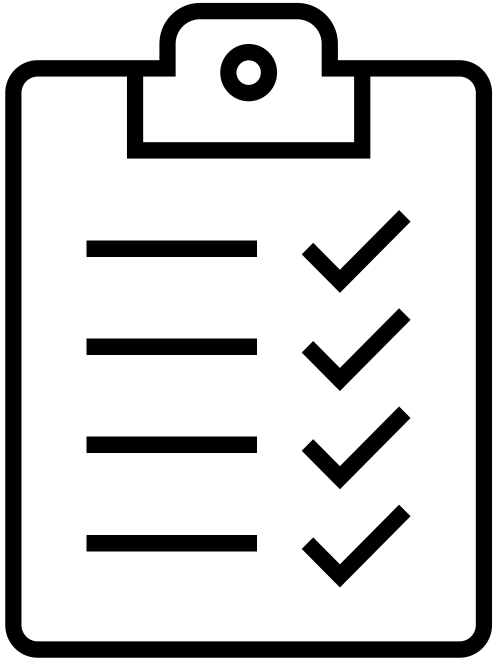
Agenda

- Competitive Bidding Overview
- Get Ready to Request Bids
- File and Certify an FCC Form 470
- Ensure an Open and Fair Process
- Wait at Least 28 Days
- Select a Service Provider
- Additional Information
- The Service Provider’s Role
- Resources
- Questions and Answers

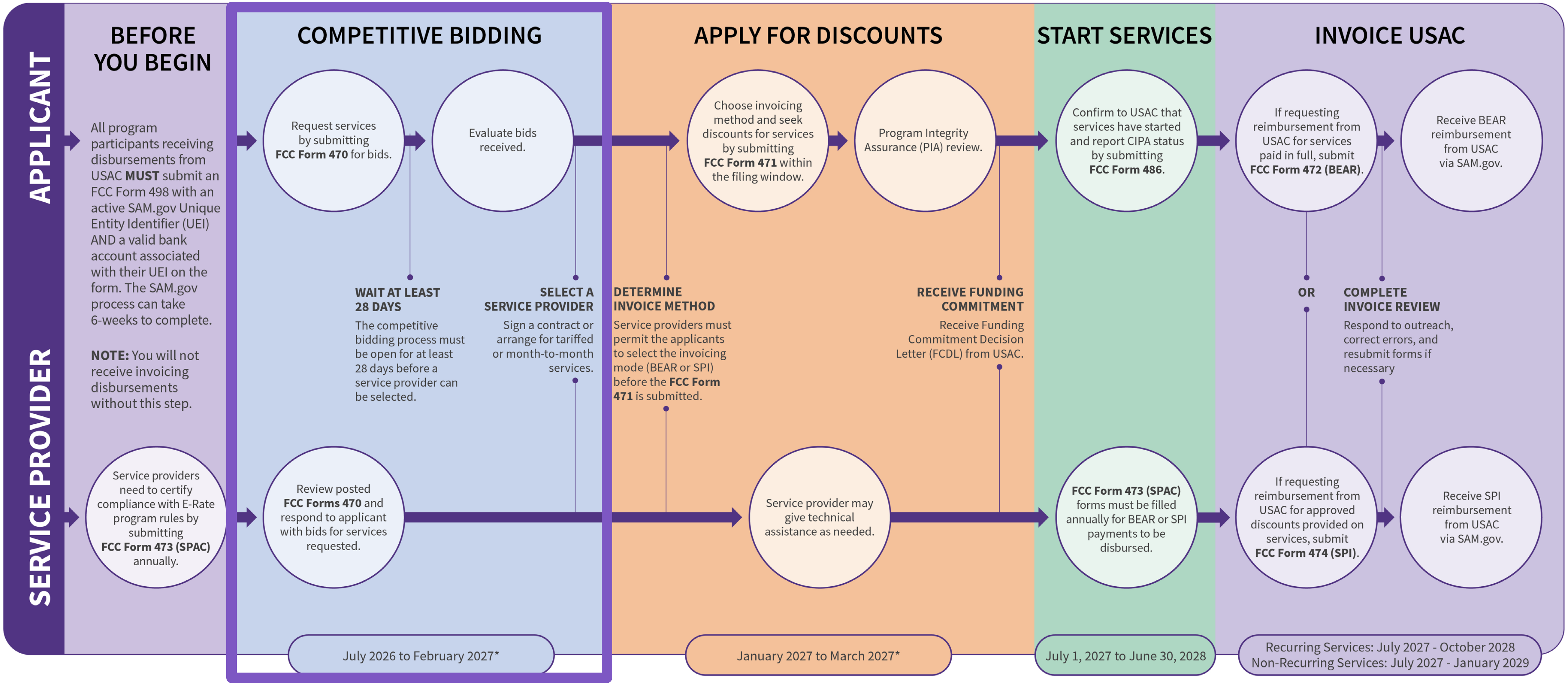


Competitive Bidding Overview

What is Competitive Bidding?

- Competitive bidding is the formal process for applicants to choose the service providers who will provide the requested equipment and services.
- Service providers review the applicant's FCC Form 470 for requested equipment and services, any procurement requirements, and then submit bids.

The E-Rate Application Process



* Date ranges reflect a typical timeline and are subject to change.

Competitive Bidding Steps

1. Get Ready to Request Bids
2. File an FCC Form 470
3. Ensure an Open and Fair Process
4. Wait At Least 28 Days
5. Select a Service Provider

1. Get Ready to Request Bids

Plan Your Project

Plan the scope of your project and the equipment and services needed.

- Review any state or local competitive bidding and procurement (purchasing) requirements that apply to you.
- Review the FCC Form 470 Guiding Statements Table to assist with determining the services needed and being requested.
- Understand concepts of Entity Eligibility and Service Eligibility
  - Review the Eligible Services List (ESL) for the current funding year to see what equipment and services are eligible for E-Rate program funding.

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FY2027+ FCC Form 470 Services Guiding Statements Table

Starting with Funding Year 2022, the FCC Form 470 includes guiding statements to help applicants request E-Rate eligible services and/or equipment for the upcoming funding year. The following tables provide a quick way to reference the options provided in the form along with guiding messages.

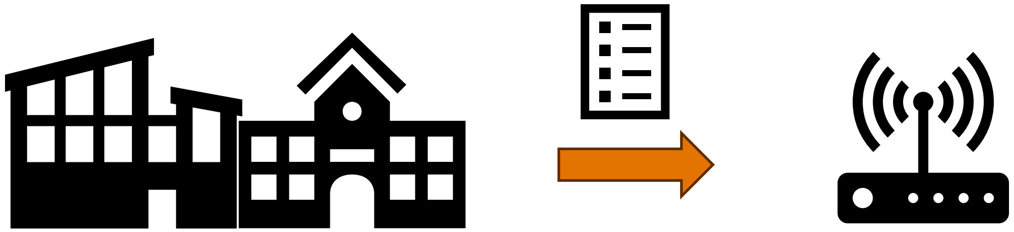
Please see footnotes for additional information where provided.

Category One

If you intend to request bids for:	You should first select "I seek bids for internet access and/or data transmission service." Next, choose the following FCC Form 470 statement:	Then, choose the following FCC Form 470 statement:
Internet Access and Data Transmission Service	I seek bids for Internet access and data transmission service (provided over any combination of transmission medium, e.g., fiber-only networks, fiber/non-fiber hybrid networks, or non-fiber networks such as cable, DSL, copper, satellite, microwave or wireless).	I seek bids for internet access and data transmission services, whether offered by one service provider(s) as a bundled package or offered by one or more service providers as independent services.[1]
Cellular Data Plan/Air Card Service	I seek bids for Internet access and data transmission service (provided over any combination of transmission medium, e.g., fiber-only networks, fiber/non-fiber hybrid networks, or non-fiber networks such as cable, DSL, copper, satellite, microwave or wireless).	I seek bids for data plans or wireless adapters (Air Cards) for mobile devices for commercial wireless service for a school or library that does not have an existing broadband internal connection (e.g., for use on a library bookmobile without a fixed connection).[2]

Help the Applicant

Scenario: Little Red House School/Library is applying for a data T1 circuit (eligible) that also has channels on the circuit dedicated to voice services (ineligible). What should they do?



2. File and Certify an FCC Form 470

File an FCC Form 470

- The applicant must file and certify an **FCC Form 470** to initiate the competitive bidding process.
  - Describe your desired services and requirements with sufficient specificity for service providers to be able to submit responsive bids.
  - No generic descriptions (e.g., all Digital Transmission Services).
  - You may also include additional bidding documentation such as a Request for Proposals (RFP) with your FCC Form 470.
    - RFP generically refers to any bidding document that describes the applicant's project and requested equipment and services in more detail.
  - Services requested on the FCC Form 470 and RFP **must** match.

When to File the FCC Form 470

- The FCC Form 470 must be filed every year for services provided under tariff, on a month-to-month basis, or for those seeking new services under contract.
- It must be filed **at least** 28 days before filing FCC Form 471.
  - Multi-year contracts: You **do not** need to file a new FCC Form 470 if the contract is still in effect and the costs/services are still within the terms of the establishing FCC Form 470 (but you do still need to file a new FCC Form 471 requesting E-Rate support each funding year).
  - After the contract's initial term is over, you will need to recompete the contract.
- Competitive Bidding Exemptions:
  - Category One: Low-Cost High-Speed Internet Access
  - Category Two: Low Cost Internal Connections (Libraries only)

Receipt Notification Letter (RNL)

- After posting FCC Form 470, USAC issues a Receipt Notification Letter (RNL) in your EPC News feed.
- Review your submitted FCC Form 470 carefully. If you need to make corrections, do the following:
  - For minor changes (see the Ministerial and Clerical Errors page on the E-Rate website), locate the form in EPC, and choose "Related Actions" to submit allowable corrections.
  - For significant changes to your form, you must file a **new** FCC Form 470 or restart your 28-day waiting period.
- The Receipt Notification Letter contains your Allowable Contract Date, which is 28 days after the certification date of your FCC Form 470.

Disqualification Factors

- You can disqualify bids if they don't meet the requirements. Bidder disqualification criteria must:
  - Be spelled out in FCC Form 470 and/or RFP, and
  - Be available to **all** potential bidders.
- The following items are examples of bid disqualification reasons:
  - Service provider not registered with the state procurement office.
  - Service provider does not have a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN), also known as the service provider's 498 ID.
  - Service provider must have an FCC RN.
  - Service provider is not bonded.
  - Service provider's bid must directly address requested equipment and services.

Competitive Bidding Tip

- When unsure whether a service falls under one of two service types, you are allowed to request bids for **both** service types.
    - For example, if you are unsure whether a piece of equipment or a service falls under Internal Connections or BMIC, you have the option to seek bids for both.

3. Ensure an Open and Fair Process

Open and Fair

- **Open** = there are no secrets in the process; information shared with one bidder must be shared with all.
- **Fair** = all bidders are treated the same, fairly, and equally.

See the Open & Fair Process page on our website for more information.

Open and Fair Guidelines

- All applicants must comply with all E-Rate, state, and local procurement requirements.
- Applicants cannot have a relationship with service providers that would unfairly influence the outcome of the competitive bidding process.
- Applicants cannot give anyone inside competitive information.
- Applicants cannot have ownership interest in the company of a service provider that is competing for services.
- Applicants **must** describe the desired equipment and services with sufficient specificity to enable interested parties to bid.
- Applicants cannot receive gifts or donations from service providers that violate or seek to circumvent FCC rules.
- Applicants **are not** required to show “proof” of E-Rate participation or share their bid evaluation information with any service provider.

Create A Bid Evaluation Matrix

- To evaluate incoming bids, create a **bid evaluation matrix** or similar document.
- Develop evaluation criteria or factors to assess the bids.
  - You can have one or multiple factors.
  - You may also have disqualifying factors.
- Assign each evaluation factor a point value or percentage.
  - The price of the **eligible equipment and services** must be the most heavily weighted factor.
  - Other factors can be considered, but they must be weighted less than the price of eligible equipment and services.

Sample Bid Evaluation Matrix

Factor	Points Available	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Vendor 3
Price of the eligible products and services	50*	20	50	40
Prior experience with the vendor	25	25	0	25
Prices for ineligible services, products, and fees	15	10	5	15
Local or in-state vendor	10	10	0	0
Total	**100**	**65**	**55**	**80**

*This number must be higher than all other numbers in the same column.

Abide by the Gift Rules

- Receipt or solicitation of gifts by applicants from service providers (and vice versa) is a competitive bidding violation.
- Service providers may not offer or provide any gifts or thing of value to applicant personnel involved in E-Rate.
- Gift prohibitions are **always** applicable – not just during the competitive bidding process.
- Exceptions for gifts: limited to items worth $20 or less, including meals or prizes, and cannot exceed $50 from one service provider to each individual per funding year.
- Watch our Gift Rules video for more details on the gift rules.

4. Wait at Least 28 Days

28-Day Waiting Period Review and Reminders

- Applicants must wait at least 28 days after certifying their FCC Form 470 before selecting a service provider, executing any contracts for contracted services, or signing and submitting an FCC Form 471. The allowable contract date is the earliest date on which an applicant can select a service provider. See your Receipt Notification Letter.
- Your state or local procurement regulations may require a longer waiting period or impose additional requirements.

28-Day Waiting Period FAQs

- **When does the waiting period start?**
  - The calendar day **after** you certify your FCC Form 470, the day you certify is day one. For example, if you certify on 1/1/2025, the waiting period starts on 1/1/2025, and your Allowable Contract Date is 1/29/2024. If you add a Request for Proposals after certifying the FCC Form 470, you may be required to restart the 28-day waiting period.
- **Do weekends count as a part of the 28 days?**
  - Yes, the 28-day period is based on calendar days.
- **When can you select a vendor?**
  - After the 28-day waiting period (unless your FCC Form 470 lists a later bid deadline.)
- **When's the last day you can select a vendor?**
  - You must select the most cost-effective service offering before you submit the FCC Form 471.
- **When can you stop receiving bids?**
  - You may set a bid deadline and include it to your narrative or RFP. This deadline must be at least 28 days after verifying your FCC Form 470 or longer depending on state rules. If you **do not add a deadline to your narrative or RFP**, you must accept bids up until you evaluate bids and make a vendor selection. These deadlines should be memorialized in your records.

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Allowable Contract Date (ACD) Infographic

CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	**Certified FCC Form 470** 1 Day 1	2 Day 2	3 Day 3	4 Day 4
5 Day 5	6 Day 6	7 Day 7	8 Day 8	9 Day 9	10 Day 10	11 Day 11
12 Day 12	13 Day 13	14 Day 14	15 Day 15	16 Day 16	17 Day 17	18 Day 18
19 Day 19	20 Day 20	21 Day 21	22 Day 22	23 Day 23	24 Day 24	25 Day 25
26 Day 26	27 Day 27	28 Day 28	**Allowable Contract Date** 29 Day 29	30	1	2

- **This is the earliest you can select a vendor.[1]**
- **You can wait up until you certify FCC Form 471 to select a vendor.[2]**

Remember

If the 470 narrative or RFP does not include a bid submission deadline

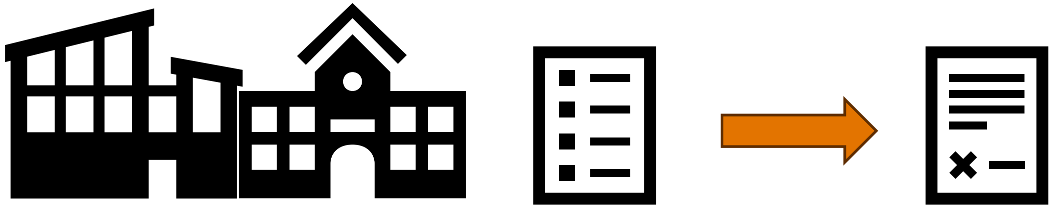
then applicants are **required** to accept all bids up until they conduct their evaluation.

[1] This may vary based on state and local procurement rules.
[2] You must select a vendor before the filing window closes.

https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/competitive-bidding/28-day-waiting-period/

Help the Applicant

Scenario: After previously certifying an FCC Form 470 which included an original RFP document, Little Red House School/Library uploaded a new RFP document to the existing FCC Form 470. This new RFP document includes a substantial change from the original submission. How could this impact the competitive bidding process?



Next Steps After the 28-Day Waiting Period

1.

Choose your service provider(s)

Notify the winning service provider(s)

→

2.

Sign a contract or legally binding agreement

On or after the Allowable Contract Date (ACD)

→

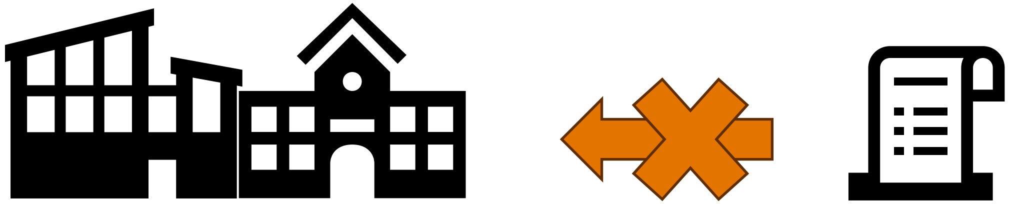
3.

File the next form (FCC Form 471)

Wait for the filing window to open

Help the Applicant

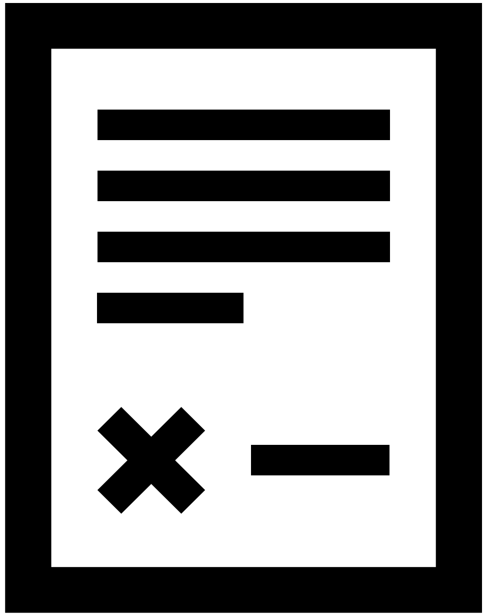
Scenario: Little Red House School/Library did not receive any bids, what should they do?



Select a Service Provider

Enter Into a Legally Binding Agreement

- After selecting a service provider, legally enter into a binding agreement with them.
- Sign something (a contract, purchase order, etc.) requesting the services from the provider(s).
- Upload the evidence to your Contract Profile in EPC.



Additional Information

State Master Contracts

- A state master contract (SMC) is competitively bid and put in place by a state government for use by entities in that state.
- If the state files an FCC Form 470:
  - The applicant cites the state's FCC Form 470 on its FCC Form 471.
  - The applicant is required to follow the applicable provisions of the state master contract and state and local procurement laws.
    - No separate bidding documents or contracts are required by the applicant citing the state's FCC Form 470, other than what is required by the state master contract and state and local procurement laws.
    - The signed state master contract between the state and the service provider must meet the FCC signed contract requirement.

Bid Awards

- **Single winner**: Single vendor wins the bid
- **Multiple Award Schedule:** State awards contract for same equipment and services to multiple vendors that can serve the same population.
  - If the state awards contracts to multiple service providers, the applicant must conduct a bid evaluation for all service providers able to provide services to the applicant under these contracts (a mini-bid process).
  - Justify vendor selection.
  - Remember to include in your mini-bid all contracts on the multiple award schedule that provide the services sought.

Common Missteps and Bidding Errors

- Failure to provide **complete and accurate** information on the FCC Form 470 and RFP, such as:
  - Correct category and service type.
  - Appropriate details on the project, deadlines, and other necessary requirements.

Avoid Mistakes: Establish Your Contract Correctly

- ❑ The contract contains the applicant's signature and date of when the contract was executed.
- ❑ The legally binding agreement contains all the material terms and conditions and contains a written acceptance of the offer.
- ❑ The contract/legally binding agreement was negotiated on or after the Allowable Contract Date on the FCC Form 470.
- ❑ The contract/legally binding agreement was negotiated/executed on or before the submission of the FCC Form 471.

Service Providers – Bid on Services

- The **applicant** starts the competitive bidding process by posting one or more FCC Forms 470 and Request(s) for Proposals (RFP) documents, if applicable, to the USAC website.
  - These documents may include specific requirements for service providers to follow during the competitive bidding process.
- **Service providers** review the information and bid on the requested services.
  - Use FCC Form 470 tools to search and view FCC Form 470 service requests and RFPs.
  - The bid should include information on E-Rate eligibility percentage and category of service.
  - The bid should be responsive to the equipment and services being requested.

Open and Fair – Service Providers

To help ensure an open and fair process, service providers should:

- **Review all the requirements**, including the FCC Form 470 and any RFP(s).
- Provide a responsive bid to what was requested by the applicant.
- Ask questions if the information provided by the applicant is unclear.
- Separate the **eligible**, **mixed bucket**, and **ineligible services** in your bid response.
- **Do not offer gifts, free services, devices, or non-E-Rate discounts** to make your response more attractive.
- **Do not offer to help** an applicant if you are also planning to respond to their bid request.

Lowest Corresponding Price (LCP)

- Service providers are required to offer applicants their services at the lowest corresponding price charged to other similarly situated customers throughout their geographic service area.
- This rule ensures that applicants are not charged more than similarly situated non-residential customers for similar services because of E-Rate participation.
- Exceptions can be made if the provider can show that they face significantly higher costs to serve this customer due to volume, mileage from facility, or length of contract.
- Applies to all service providers and for all service arrangements (tariff, month-to-month, and contracted services).

Resources

Additional Resources

- Competitive Bidding Page
- Competitive Bidding Infographic
- Competitive Bidding FAQs
- 28-Day Waiting Period Page
- How to File an FCC Form 470 eLM
- Guiding Statements Video
- Guiding Statements Reference Table
- Applicant Process Page
- Service Provider Process Page
- Document Retention

Additional Resources Continued

Visit the **Learn** section of the E-Rate website to find useful information

- Subscribe to the E-Rate News Brief
  - Upcoming Date reminders
  - Program announcements
- Webinars
  - Watch past webinars and register for upcoming trainings
- eLearning Modules (eLMs)
  - Learn how to navigate various aspects of the E-Rate program
- Review Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Resource Spotlight: eLearning Modules (eLMs)

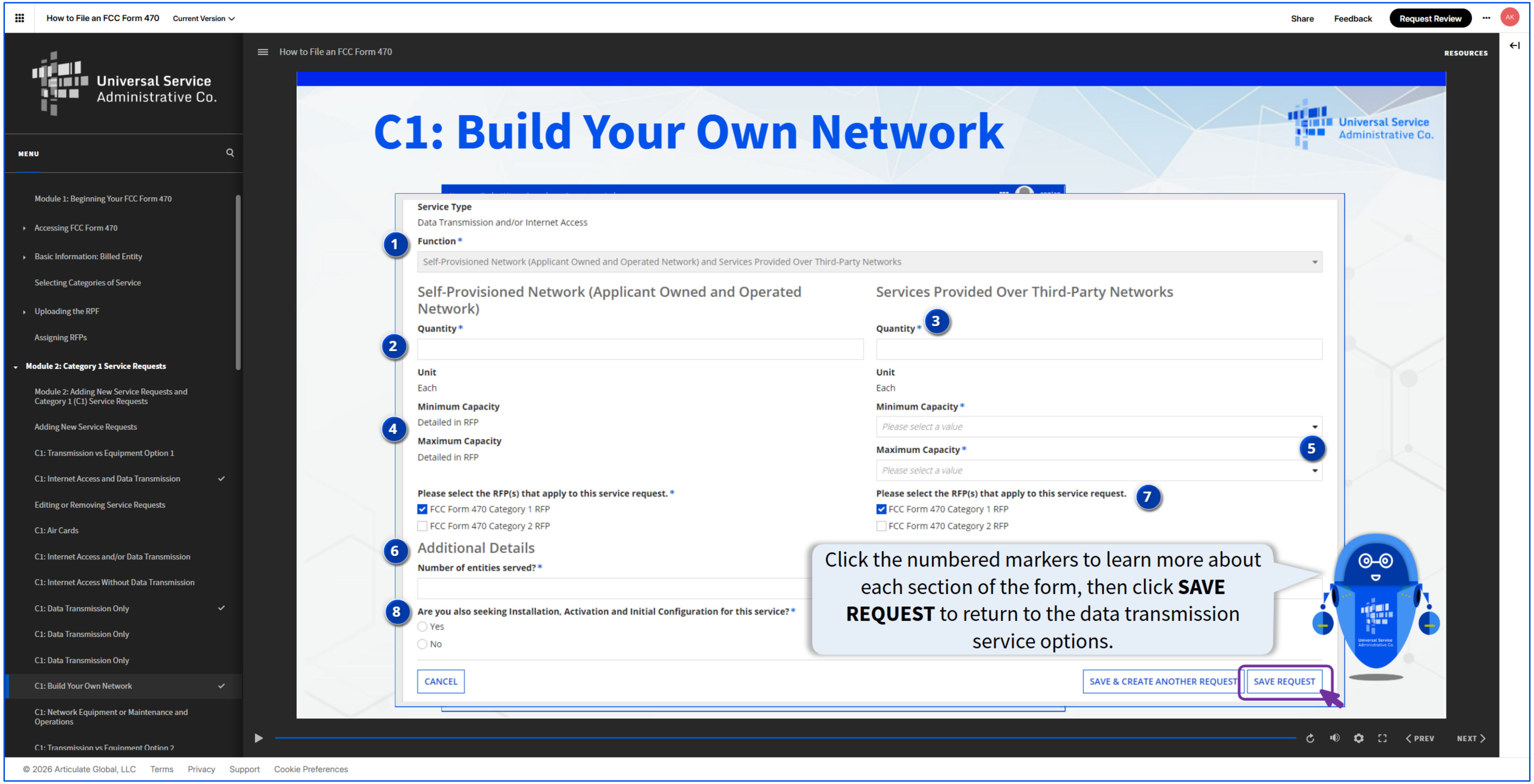
Resource Spotlight: eLM

- What is an eLM?
- How to Use an eLM
- Where to Find eLMs

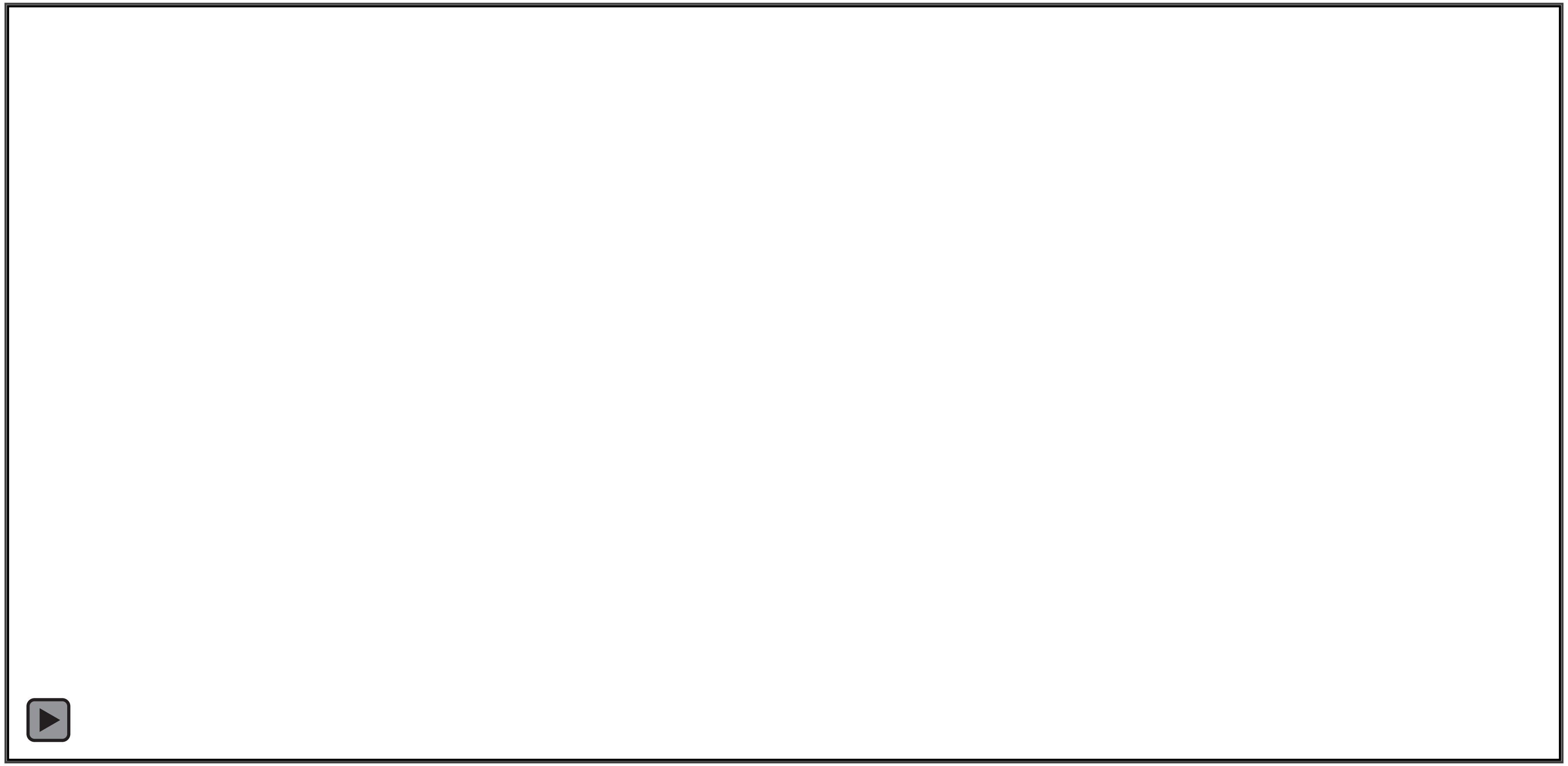
What is an eLearning Module (eLM)?

- Interactive User Guide
  - Interactive modules incorporating multiple learning styles
  - Self-paced EPC FCC Form walk throughs
  - Review of E-Rate program rules and processes
  - Links to resources on the USAC's website

Mimics the Process



Easy to Navigate



Invoice Status Overview

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Comprehensive Visuals

Status	Description
Incomplete	An Invoice has been **created but not certified**
Certified	The invoice has been submitted and certified and **one or more invoice lines have yet to be processed** by USAC
Processed	**All lines of the invoice** have been **processed and paid**
Cancelled	The invoice has been **discarded before submission** OR has been **cancelled after it was submitted and certified**

One Stop Shop for Resources

Resources

- ✓ Applicant Process
- ✓ E-Rate Resources
- ✓ E-Rate Invoice Disbursements Data Lookup Tool
- ✓ Invoice Decision Code Table
- ✓ E-Rate Webinars

- ✓ **Customer Service Center (CSC)**
  - ✓ Call us at (888) 203-8100
  - ✓ Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST
  - ✓ Create a customer service case in EPC

Additional Web Based Trainings for EPC Invoicing:

- ✓ Course 1: EPC Invoicing: Submitting and Certifying Invoices for Applicants
- ✓ Course 3: EPC Invoicing: Outreach and System Notifications for Applicants

How to Use an eLM?

- Side-by-Side Guidance
  - Have the form or tool you’re training on up on a second monitor and complete it as you go
- Use the Table of Contents on the left of the screen
  - Automatically opens
  - Skip to the content you need

Where to Find eLMs?

- Accessible on the videos page of E-Rate's website and each respective form's webpage (linked above).
  - Interactive User Guides for the pre and post commitment processes: Admin Window, FCC Forms 470, 471, 472, 473/474, 498
  - Open Data Basics: Tools

Questions?

E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process
FCC Form 471

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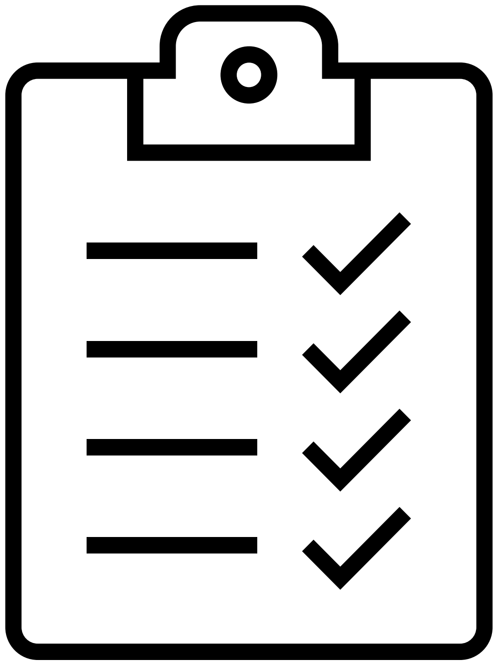
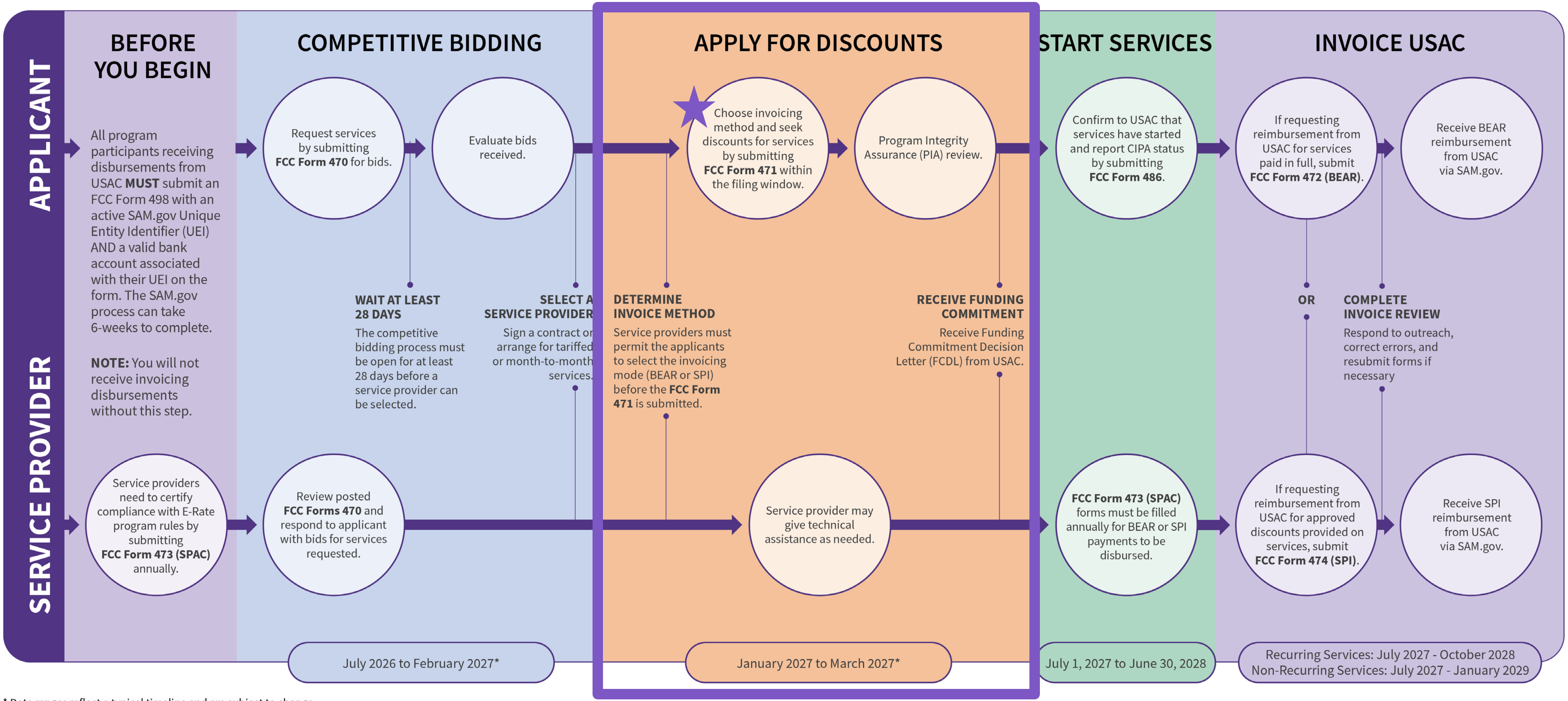
Agenda

- What is the FCC Form 471?
- Requesting Funding (FCC Form 471)
- Application Review
- Funding Commitments



What is the FCC Form 471?

What is the FCC Form 471?



* Date ranges reflect a typical timeline and are subject to change.

FCC Form 471 Overview

- Applicants file an FCC Form 471 (Description of Services Ordered and Certification Form) to request funding for eligible services and equipment for the upcoming funding year.
- Applicants must:
  - Include information on the recipients of services and service provider(s);
  - Provide detailed descriptions of services including costs and dates of service and/or the requested equipment; and
  - Certify compliance with program rules.
- The filing window for the FCC Form 471 – generally opens in **mid-January** and **closes in mid-March**.
- You can file FCC Form 471 after you have completed your competitive bidding process (FCC Form 470), waited 28 days, selected your vendor(s), and signed contract(s) (if appropriate).

Your FCC Form 470 and FCC Form 471 Must Match

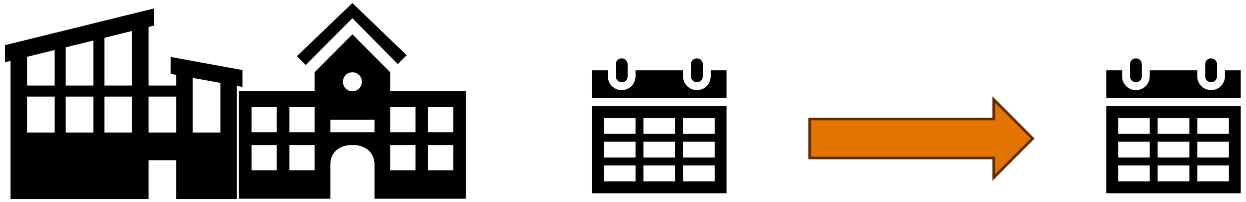
- Your FCC Form 471 must only request equipment and services cited from the FCC Form 470.
- Applicants should ensure that all equipment/services being requested on the FCC Form 471 were competitively bid via the FCC Form 470.
- If you bid for two Category Two (C2) service types on your FCC Form 470 and invoice USAC for three C2 service types, this implies that additional information, other than what was competitively bid for, may have influenced the selection of service provider.
  - This discrepancy **cannot** be corrected after competitive bidding ends.
  - You are allowed to select all three service types on your FCC Form 470 if you are unsure of what service types will be provided.
  - To avoid a competitive bidding violation, if there is time before the FCC Form 471 deadline, you would need to recertify a new FCC Form 470 with the additional service type, wait an additional 28 days, and select a service provider **after** the updated 28th day.

Relationship Between Unique Numbers

Choose Category 1 or 2	C1 or C2 are filed on separate FCC Form 471s
Application Number FCC Form 471	Each FCC Form 471 is assigned a unique number
Funding Request Number (FRN) Each FCC Form 471 can have one or multiple FRNs	Each FRN must have **all** of the following information in common: Billed entity number (BEN), contact information, category of service (C1 or C2), service type (data transmission and/or internet access, internal connections, BMIC, managed internal broadband services), FCC Form 470, service provider (SPIN), purchase type (contract, month-to-month, tariff), contract ID (if you have one), service start and end dates.
FRN Line Item	Each FRN Line Item must have **all** of the following information in common: Equipment or service, rates and quantities, and recipients of service (ROS). Each may have unique or overlapping ROS. Duplicative or redundant services are ineligible.

Help the Applicant

Scenario: Little Red House School/Library has services under different contracts, and services provided on a month-to-month basis. How does this impact their application?



Common FCC Form 471 Application Errors

- **Not correctly classifying the category of service or equipment/service type on the Form 470**
  - Determine the equipment/services you need and contact the CSC to verify correct classification of equipment and services.
  - Competitively bid for all necessary equipment and service types by filing an accurate Form 470 that accurately describes the equipment and service(s).
- **Filing an inaccurate Funding Request Number (FRN) with the wrong equipment or service type**
  - Work with your service provider to ensure that equipment and services are accurately represented on the FCC Form 471.
  - Contact the CSC or your Program Integrity Assurance reviewer with any questions.
- **Failing to remove ineligible services and equipment**
  - Work with your service provider to determine whether your requested equipment and services is 100% eligible.
  - Remove any ineligible amounts when creating your FRNs(s).

Eligible Software: Key Reminders

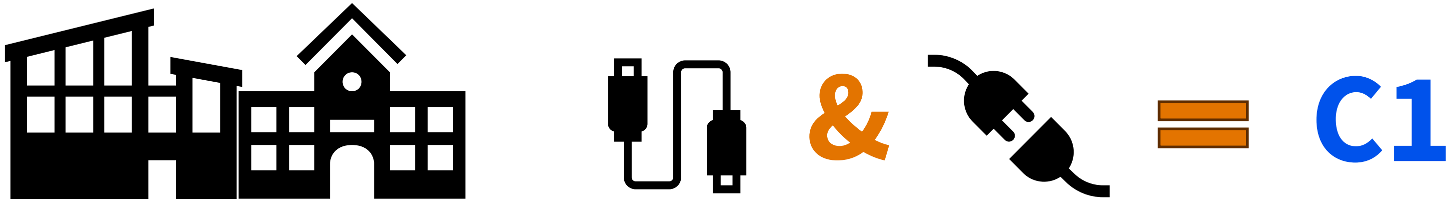
- Software and remote based services/licenses associated with eligible equipment are eligible as Internal Connections.
    - This includes Right To Use or Client Access Licenses and/or maintenance-based software/licenses such as bug fixes or security patches.

“Out of Window” Applications

- In FY2026, if you had certified your FCC Form 470 after **March 4th, 2026**, you would still have needed to wait 28 days before certifying FCC Form 471.
- You would not have been able to certify your FCC Form 471 before the filing window closed on April 1st.
- In this situation, file and certify the FCC Form 471 **as soon as** you have waited 28 days and selected the most cost-effective service offerings. You will then need to file a waiver request with the FCC. Basic instructions for filing the FCC Window Waiver Requests are on the FCC Form 471 Filing page.

Help the Applicant

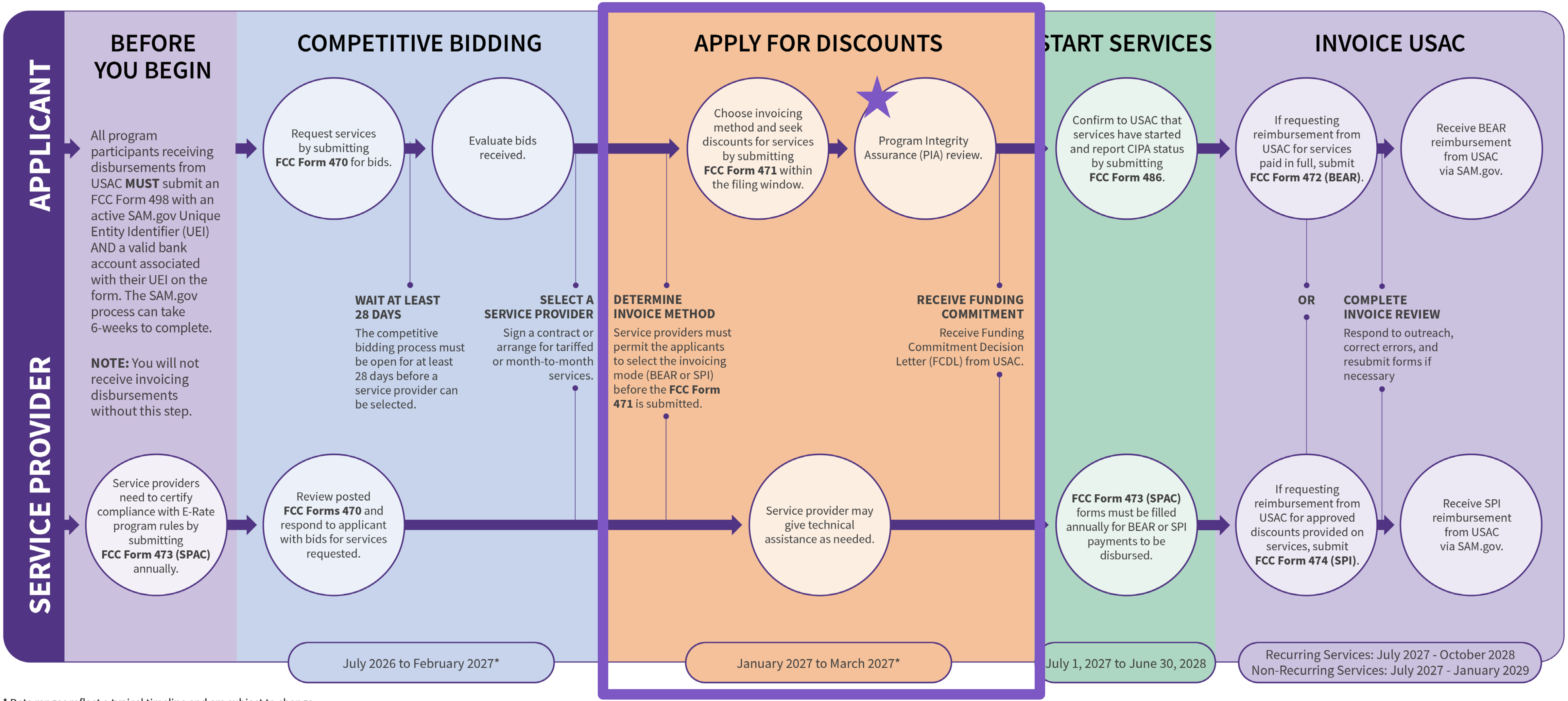
Little Red House School/Library is filing for Fiber Ethernet and Copper Cable Modem which both fall under Data Transmission/Internet Access. How does this impact how they file their FCC Form 471?



Application Review

Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) Review

After applicants certify an FCC Form 471 within the filing window, PIA reviewers check the information on the form for completeness and accuracy.



* Date ranges reflect a typical timeline and are subject to change.

Before Your PIA Review – Review Your FCC Form 471

- After certifying your FCC Form 471, and while you are waiting for your program integrity assurance review, there are some areas you should double-check for accuracy.
- If you find any information that should be corrected or updated, you can submit a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) Modification Request.
- If you are using a new or existing contract on your FCC Form 471, you must have a contract record uploaded to your EPC profile.
  - To create that record, go to your organization page and click **Contracts**, then **Manage Contracts** and **Add a New Contract**.

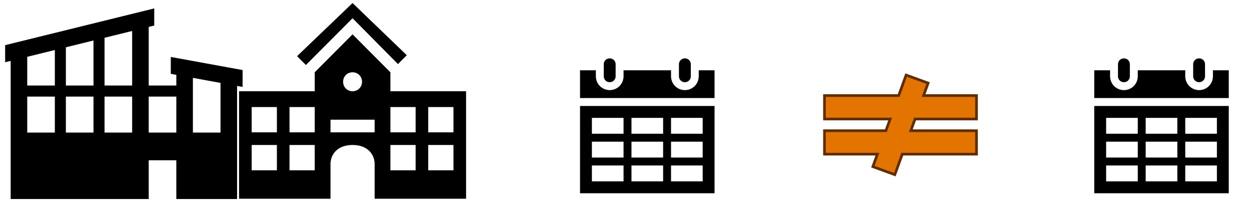
Funding Commitments

Funding Commitment Decision Letter

- After the program integrity assurance review process has been completed, USAC issues a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) containing USAC's decisions on your funding requests.
- You can find this decision in the Newsfeed in your organization's EPC account.
- You should review this decision carefully, as it contains important information both for planning to start services and for completing the additional steps in the application process.
- If you disagree with one or more of the decisions in your FCDL, you can appeal to USAC.

Help the Applicant

Scenario: Little Red House School/Library has different start and end dates for some services. How does this impact how they file their FCC Form 471?



Additional Resources

- FCC Form 471 Filing page
- FCC Form 471 e-Learning Modules
- FCC Form 471 Download Tool
- FCC Form 471 Submission Checklist

Questions?

Resource Spotlight: Webinars

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Resource Spotlight: Webinars

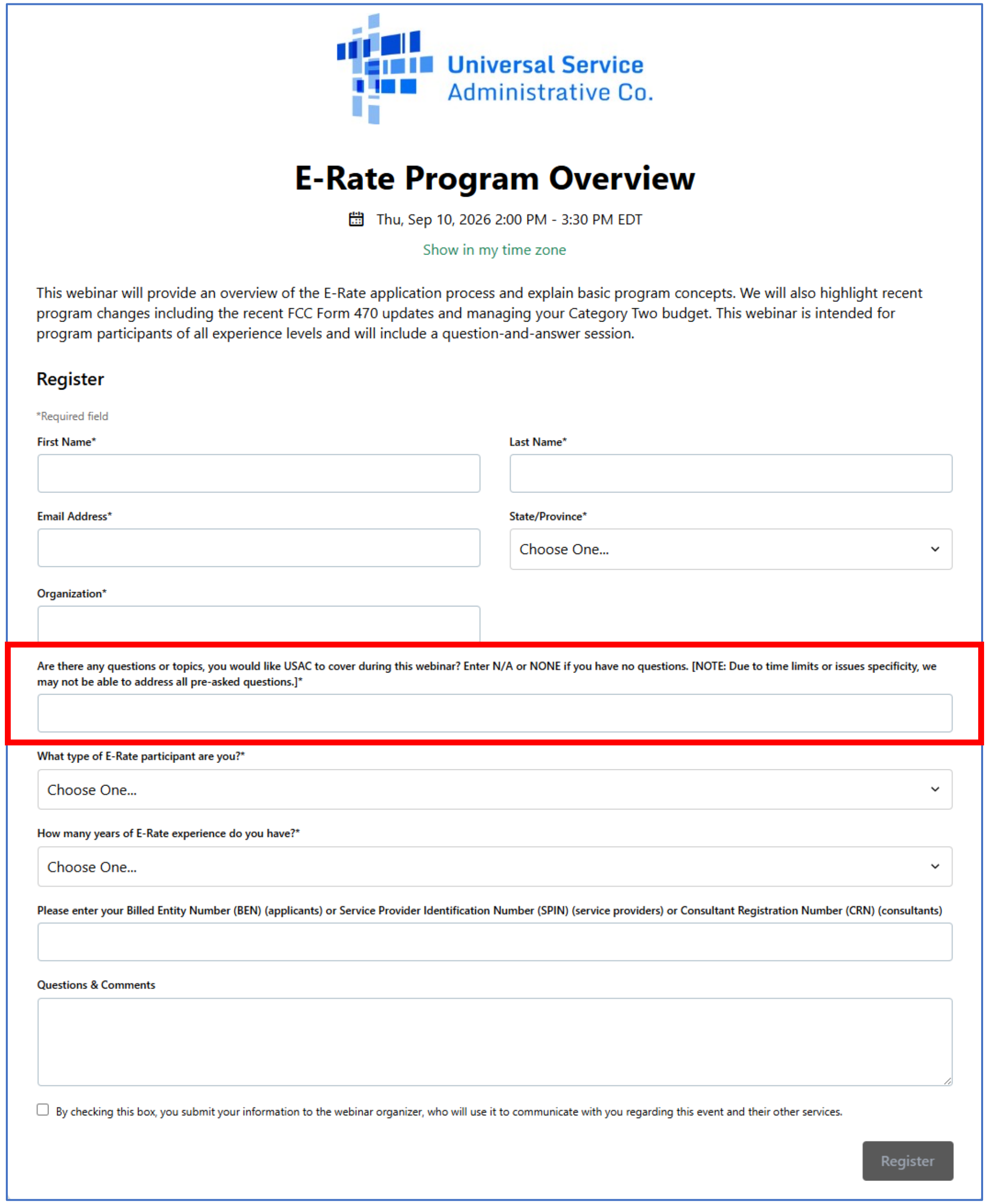
- What is a Webinar?
- How to Use a Webinar
- Where to Find Webinars?

What is a Webinar?

- Online training covering the nuts and bolts of the E-Rate program
  - New developments
  - Best practices
- Opportunities for Q&A with Subject Matter Experts
- Recordings and slide decks are available on the Webinar page of E-Rate’s website.
- Hosted throughout the year.

How to Use Webinars?

- Submit your questions in advance
  - When registering for webinars, you have the option to ask a question beforehand.
  - Questions are used to tailor content more specifically to attendee's needs.
- Ask question throughout the webinar.
- Provide feedback via the emailed survey.



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E-Rate Program Overview

Thu, Sep 10, 2026 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM EDT

Show in my time zone

This webinar will provide an overview of the E-Rate application process and explain basic program concepts. We will also highlight recent program changes including the recent FCC Form 470 updates and managing your Category Two budget. This webinar is intended for program participants of all experience levels and will include a question-and-answer session.

Register

*Required field

First Name*

Last Name*

Email Address*

State/Province*

Choose One...

Organization*

Are there any questions or topics, you would like USAC to cover during this webinar? Enter N/A or NONE if you have no questions. [NOTE: Due to time limits or issues specificity, we may not be able to address all pre-asked questions.]*

What type of E-Rate participant are you?*

Choose One...

How many years of E-Rate experience do you have?*

Choose One...

Please enter your Billed Entity Number (BEN) (applicants) or Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) (service providers) or Consultant Registration Number (CRN) (consultants)

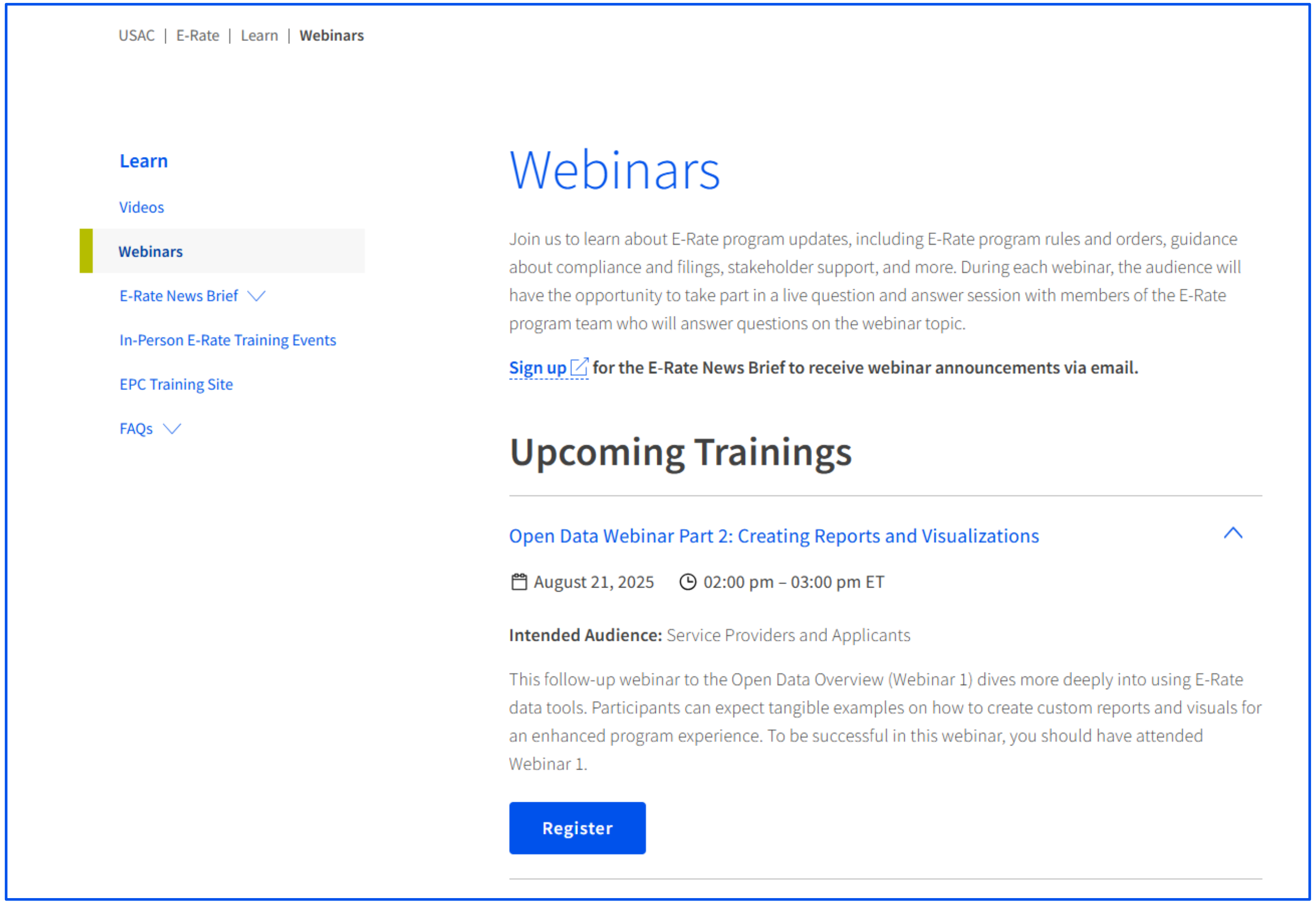
Questions & Comments

By checking this box, you submit your information to the webinar organizer, who will use it to communicate with you regarding this event and their other services.

Register

Where to Find Webinars?

- Accessible in the Learn section of the E-Rate website on the Webinars page.
    - If you are unable to attend, recordings and downloadable PowerPoint presentations can be found here.



Questions?

Improving E-Rate

Listening Session: Improving E-Rate

- We want to hear from you!
  - What's working?
  - As E-Rate administrators, what can we do to help you?
  - What questions do you have?

E-Rate Fall Applicant Training

Audit and Assurance Division

Agenda

- Audit and Assurance Division (AAD) Overview
  - Payment Quality Assurance (PQA)
  - Supply Chain Audit Program (SCAP)
  - Beneficiary and Contributor Audit Program (BCAP)
- Audit/Assessment Process
- E-Rate Common Findings
- Key Takeaways

Audit and Assurance Division (AAD) Overview

Payment Quality Assurance	Supply Chain Audit Program	Beneficiary and Contributor Audit Program
Determines improper payment rates for USF programs	Assesses compliance with FCC Rules as it relates to national security threats to the communications supply chain	Assesses compliance with FCC Rules for USF programs
Evaluates the accuracy of data submitted for USF purposes and USAC’s internal disbursement processes (a high-level review)	Evaluates whether program participants have used USF funds and federal subsidies to purchase any equipment or services provided or manufactured by Covered Companies.	Evaluates the accuracy of data submitted for USF purposes (a detailed review)
Identifies overpayments that must be recaptured	Identifies, in consultation with the FCC, what corrective action is appropriate	Identifies correct contribution obligations (for contributor audits)/overpayments that must be recaptured (for beneficiary audits)
Deters waste, fraud and abuse		
Identifies FCC Rules that may require the attention of USAC or FCC management		

Audit/Assessment Process

Audit/Assessment Process

- Three-phrase process

Audit/Assessment Process

Planning

- Announcement letter
- Entrance conference (N/A for PQA)
- Initial documentation requests (see next page)

Audit/Assessment Process

Initial Document Requests

- PQA - https://www.usac.org/wp-content/uploads/e-rate/documents/SL-Documents.pdf
- SCAP - https://www.usac.org/wp-content/uploads/about/documents/pdf/audit/Supply-Chain-Audit-Checklist.pdf
- BCAP - https://www.usac.org/wp-content/uploads/e-rate/documents/resources/e-rate-program-list-of-documents-to-retain.pdf

Audit/Assessment Process

Fieldwork

- Testing
  - Site visit, if applicable
- Quality assurance review

Audit/Assessment Process

Reporting

- Exit conference (N/A for PQA)
- Response to audit findings
- Audit report/assessment closure letter
- Post audit/assessment survey

Audit/Assessment Process

- Conclusions
  - Finding – FCC rule violation
  - Other Matter – not an FCC rule violation but the issue warrants attention

Estimated Audit/Assessment Duration

- PQA Assessment – 3 months*
- SCAP Audit – 8 months*
- BCAP Audit – 9 months*

*Note: The above audit/assessment durations are estimates. The length of an audit/assessment depends on may factors, including the timeliness of providing documentation to AAD, complexity of documentation being reviewed, and audit issues encountered.

E-Rate Common Findings

Common Findings

- List of Common Findings
- Top Three Findings
  - Invoicing
  - Competitive Bidding
  - Beneficiary Did Not Pay Non-Discount Share

Invoicing: Common Errors

- Service provider/beneficiary invoiced the E-Rate Program for:
  - Ineligible equipment/service, locations, and/or recipients
  - Costs exceeding amounts requested and approved on the FCC Form 471
  - Equipment/services not received/provided, including duplicate requests
  - Equipment/services received outside the Funding Year
  - Beneficiary received or contracted for equipment/services not included in the FCC Form 470 and/or RFP

Invoicing: Best Practices

- Utilize:
  - USAC's website to identify ineligible recipients for the E-Rate program (e.g., students under the age of 3); and
  - Eligible Services List to verify that all equipment/services are eligible.
- Become familiar with cost allocation guidelines
  - Services provided to ineligible locations and/or recipients are ineligible for reimbursement through E-Rate program ;
  - C1 services received at NIFs that would exceed 10% of the service on the network or ordering services that exceed the bandwidth needed for eligible use can not be reimbursed from the E-Rate program;
  - C2 services must still be cost-allocated when installed in a NIF except that drops or jacks that are part of a local area network serving an eligible purpose are eligible, to the extent that the applicant is not ordering more cabling drops than necessary for their local area networks;
  - Cabling remains ineligible when installed specifically for a dedicated voice or security camera network.
- Review Service Provider invoices to confirm equipment/services agree to FCC Form 471 and discount percentage was applied appropriately

Competitive Bidding: Common Errors

- Beneficiary does not provide documentation to demonstrate it conducted a fair and open competitive bidding process.
- Beneficiary does not select the most cost-effective offering.

Competitive Bidding: Best Practices

- Ensure that the FCC Form 470, RFP, any modifications, Q&A responses, and any other information is made available in the same format for 28 days before signing a contract
- Use a bid evaluation matrix that assigns weights (e.g., cost = 30 points, experience = 20 points, etc.)
  - Price must be the most heavily weighted factor, even in a multi-tiered bidding process.
  - Include the bid evaluation criteria with associated weights and any disqualification factors in the FCC Form 470 and/or RFP.
- Maintain all competitive bidding documentation for at least 10 years from the last date to receive service, including:
  - Winning and losing bids;
  - Disqualified bids (i.e., submitted bid did not address requests);
  - Scoring sheets and internal communications used in the decision-making process; and
  - Executed contracts or legally binding agreements
- Restart Competitive Bidding process if there is a significant change in requested equipment/services

Beneficiary Payment of the Non-Discounted Share: Common Errors

- The Beneficiary does not pay its portion of the costs for E-Rate supported equipment/services in a timely manner
- The Beneficiary does not provide evidence that its non-discounted share was paid

Beneficiary Payment of the Non-Discounted Share: Best Practices

- Understand the non-discounted share requirement is not covered by the E-Rate program
  - The Beneficiary must pay this share from its own resources – not from the Service Provider, E-Rate funds, or other prohibited sources
- Pay Service Provider bills within 90 days of invoice date
- Review invoices to confirm non-discounted share agrees to contract
  - For Service Provider invoices, validate the Service Provider is only invoicing Beneficiary for its non-discounted share
  - For Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement, validate reimbursement is for the Beneficiary's non-discounted share.
- Maintain detailed payment documentation showing amount paid and date of payment (e.g., service provider bills, cancelled checks, bank statements, etc.)

Key Takeaways

- Maintain **documentation** to demonstrate compliance with FCC rules
- Provide documentation in a **timely** manner.
- Ask **questions** to ensure you are providing adequate documentation.
- Keep accurate **records** of all data submitted and properly **label** such records.
- Provide **reconciliations** for any conflicting or unclear information in reporting.
- Always **document** everything!
- Contact USAC's Audit and Assurance team via email: auditinquiry@usac.org

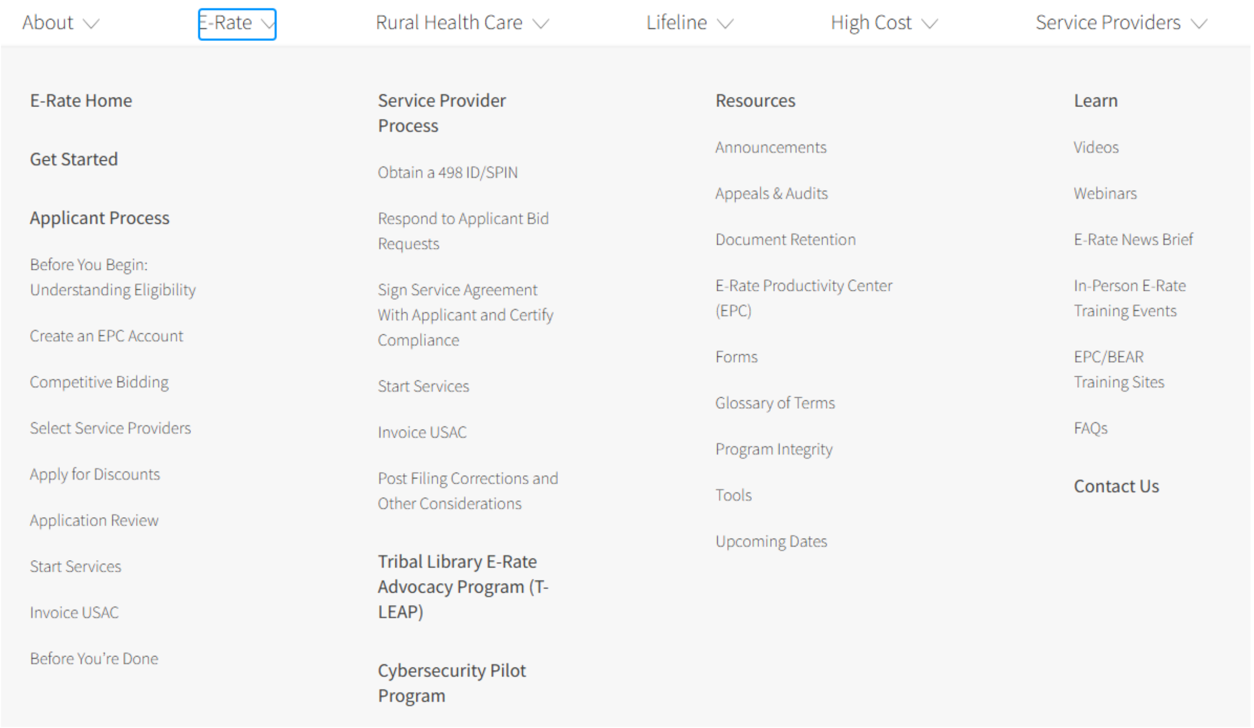
Questions?

Resource Spotlight: Website Tour

Universal Service Administrative Co.

What's Available on the Website?

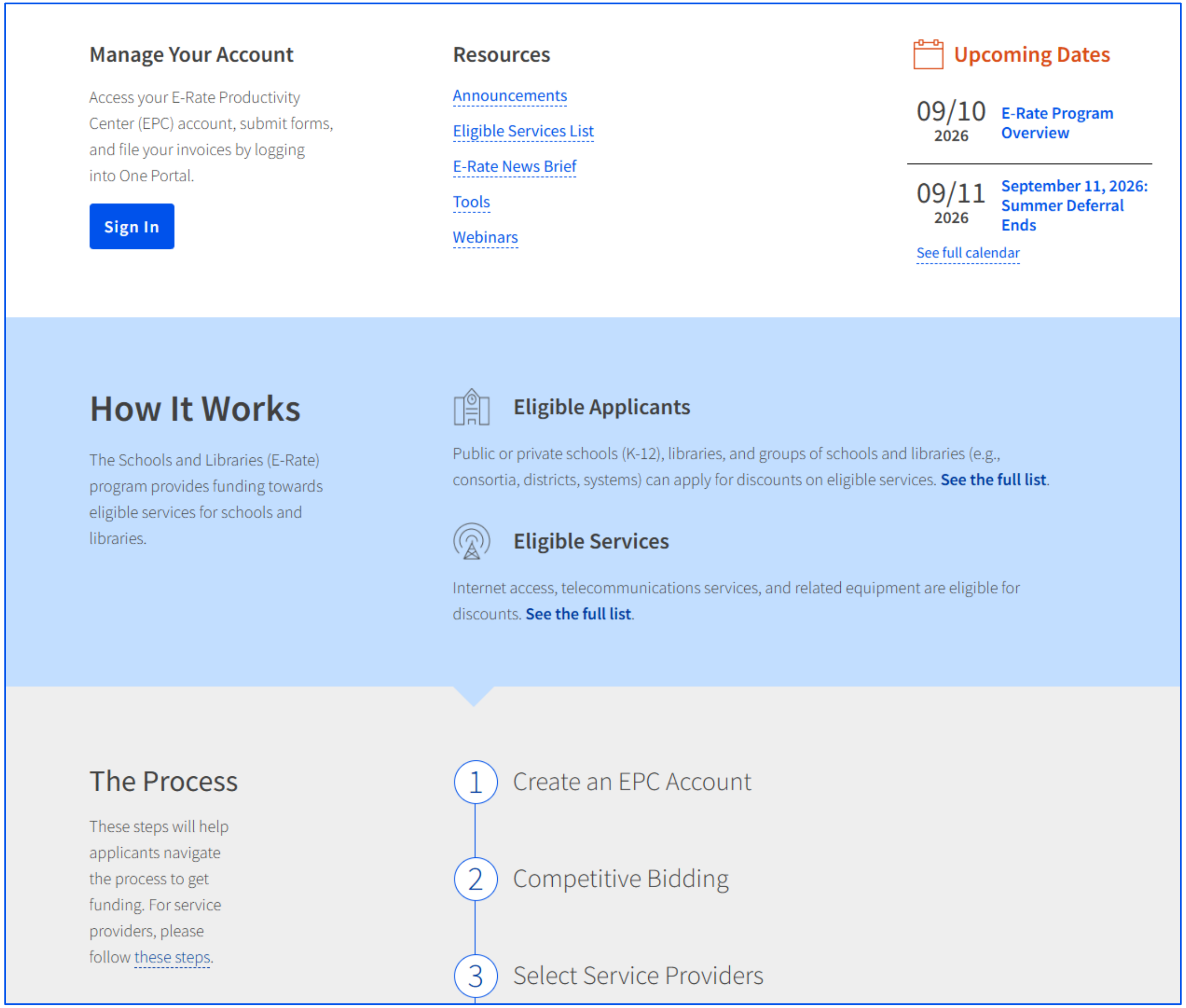
- Detailed descriptions of each step of the process
- Training
  - Webinars
  - ELMs
- Infographics
- Announcements
- News Brief



Home Screen

For new and experienced users:

- EPC sign-in
- Upcoming dates
- Program overview
- Announcements



Get Started Page

For new users:

- Provides a general overview of:
  - The program structure
  - Eligibility
  - Different roles
  - Provides links to helpful infographics

Get Started

The E-Rate program offers discounts of up to 90 percent to eligible schools and libraries on internet access, data transmission services, and internal connections. To receive funding, the equipment and/or services must be competitively bid and approved.

USAC administers the E-Rate program, with oversight from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Additional Resources

E-Rate Informational Video

Application Process Flow Chart

Are you eligible?

To participate in the E-Rate program, schools and libraries must meet eligibility requirements and ensure that they are requesting eligible equipment and/or services.

Schools (public or private, K-12) libraries, and groups of schools and libraries (e.g., consortia, districts, and systems) are eligible to apply for discounts. View a full list of Eligible Applicants.

Internet access, telecommunications services, and related[TS2.1] equipment (e.g., Wi-Fi hardware, cabling, and basic maintenance services) are eligible to be discounted. View a full list of Eligible Services.

How does the E-Rate program cycle work?

The E-Rate program follows a static cycle dictated by filing windows set by the FCC. While E-Rate's funding year starts on July 1 and ends the following June, school and library applicants may proactively participate in the program and work with service providers throughout the calendar year.

For more information on the date ranges for key E-Rate activities, view this graphic of the program's timeline. (Note: The timeline reflects typical dates but is subject to change.)

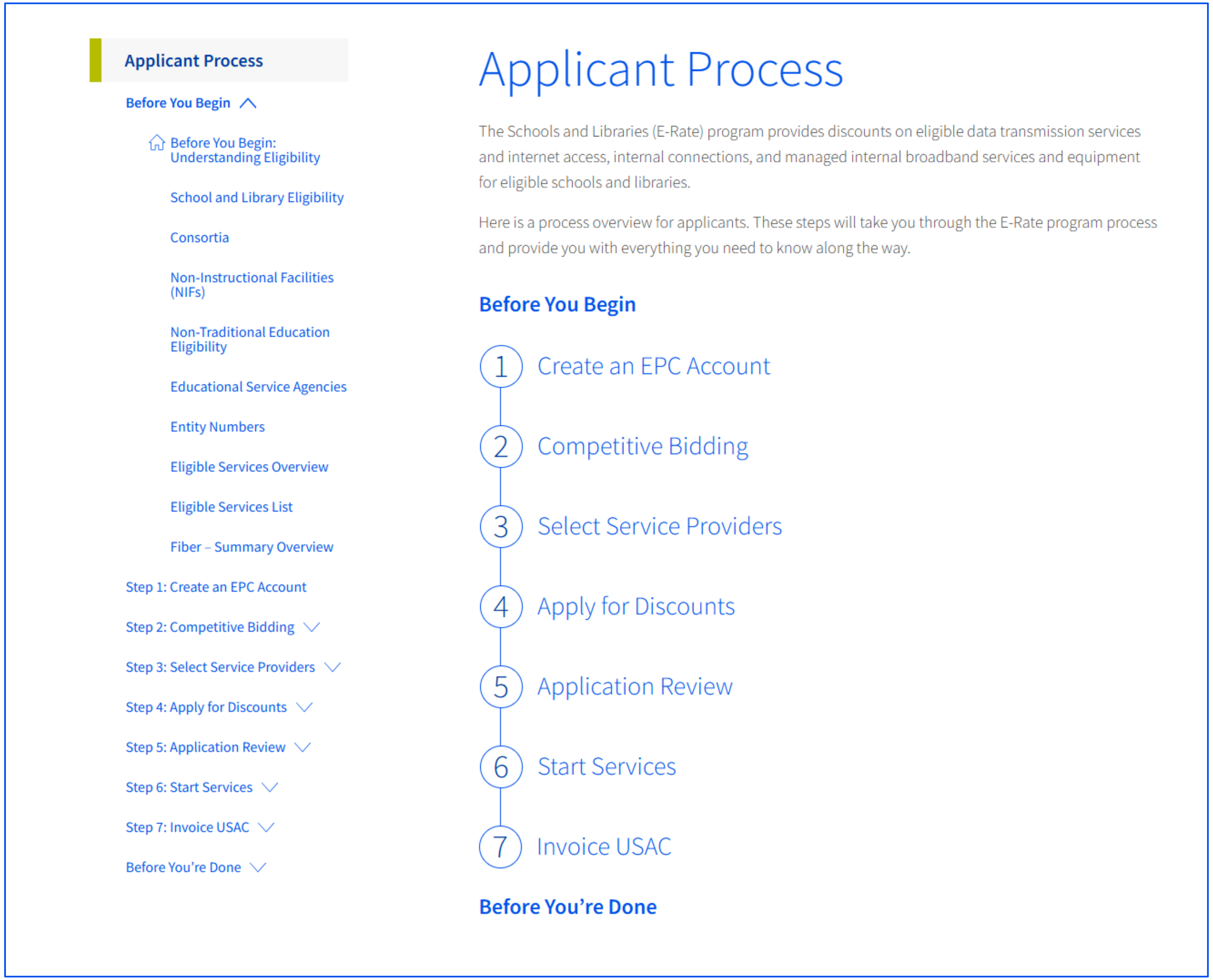
How do discounts work?

E-Rate uses a discount matrix to determine the correct discount level for a school district or library

Applicant Process Page

For new and experienced users:

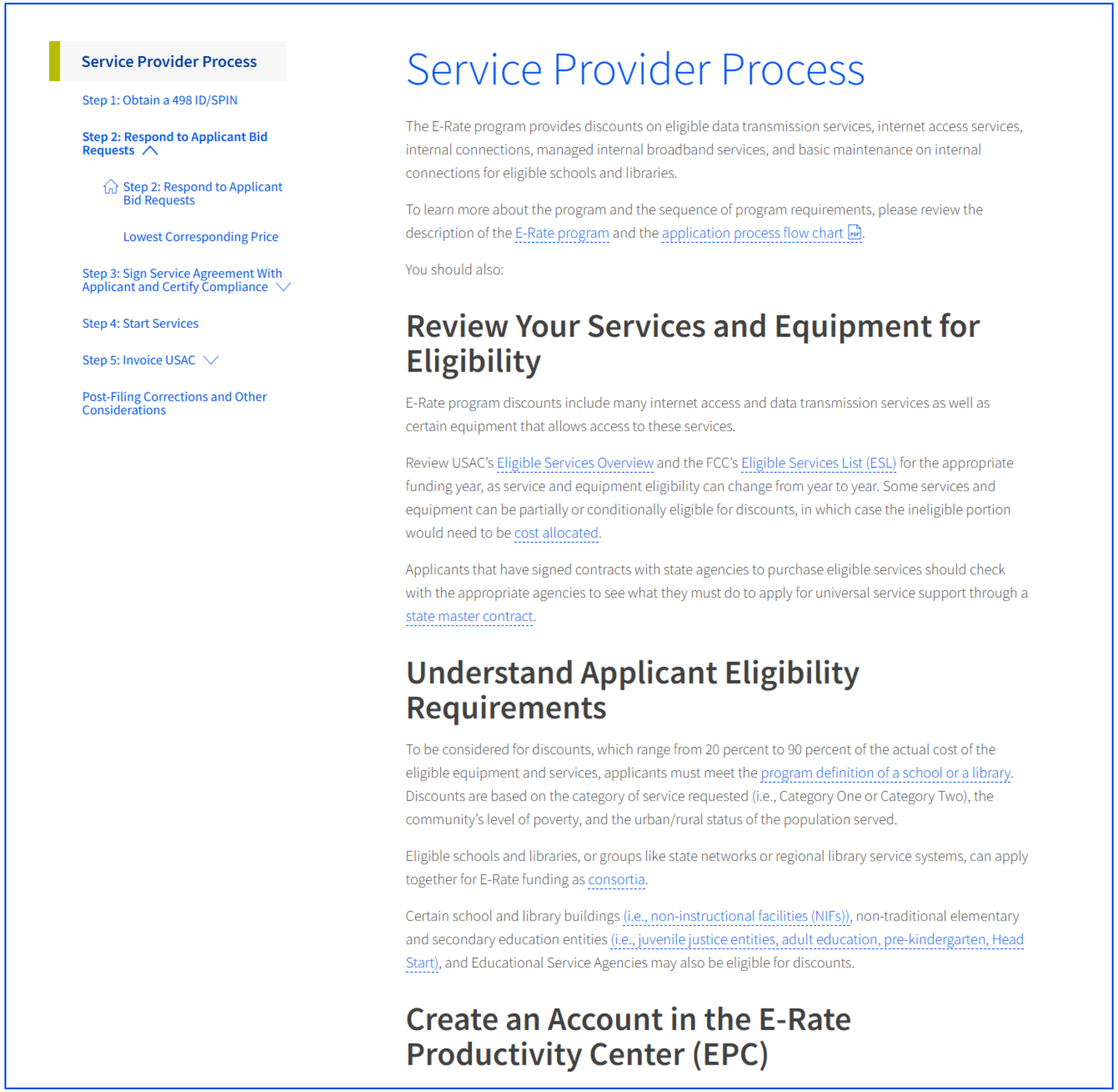
- Provides detailed descriptions of:
  - Each step of the process
  - Required forms
  - Eligibility requirements
  - Best practices
  - Definitions



Service Provider Process Page

For new and experienced users:

- The page on E-Rate's section of the USAC's website differs from USAC's general Service Provider page because:
  - It provides details of steps specific to the E-Rate program
    - Process
    - Forms
  - It goes over E-Rate specific eligibility requirements



Service Provider Process

Step 1: Obtain a 498 ID/SPIN

Step 2: Respond to Applicant Bid Requests

Step 2: Respond to Applicant Bid Requests

Lowest Corresponding Price

Step 3: Sign Service Agreement With Applicant and Certify Compliance

Step 4: Start Services

Step 5: Invoice USAC

Post-Filing Corrections and Other Considerations

Service Provider Process

The E-Rate program provides discounts on eligible data transmission services, internet access services, internal connections, managed internal broadband services, and basic maintenance on internal connections for eligible schools and libraries.

To learn more about the program and the sequence of program requirements, please review the description of the E-Rate program and the application process flow chart.

You should also:

Review Your Services and Equipment for Eligibility

E-Rate program discounts include many internet access and data transmission services as well as certain equipment that allows access to these services.

Review USAC's Eligible Services Overview and the FCC's Eligible Services List (ESL) for the appropriate funding year, as service and equipment eligibility can change from year to year. Some services and equipment can be partially or conditionally eligible for discounts, in which case the ineligible portion would need to be cost allocated.

Applicants that have signed contracts with state agencies to purchase eligible services should check with the appropriate agencies to see what they must do to apply for universal service support through a state master contract.

Understand Applicant Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for discounts, which range from 20 percent to 90 percent of the actual cost of the eligible equipment and services, applicants must meet the program definition of a school or a library. Discounts are based on the category of service requested (i.e., Category One or Category Two), the community's level of poverty, and the urban/rural status of the population served.

Eligible schools and libraries, or groups like state networks or regional library service systems, can apply together for E-Rate funding as consortia.

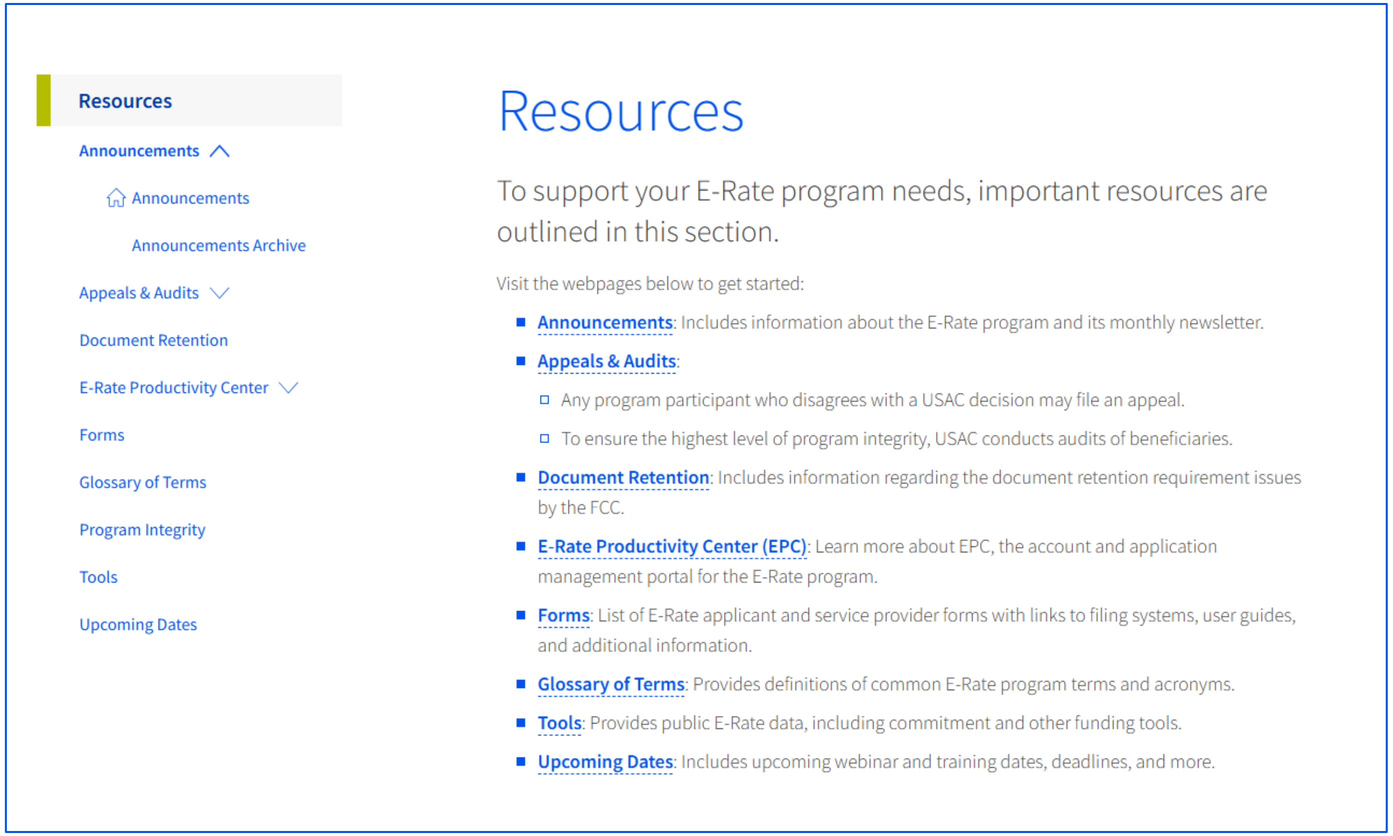
Certain school and library buildings (i.e., non-instructional facilities (NIFs)), non-traditional elementary and secondary education entities (i.e., juvenile justice entities, adult education, pre-kindergarten, Head Start), and Educational Service Agencies may also be eligible for discounts.

Create an Account in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC)

Resources Page

For new and experienced users:

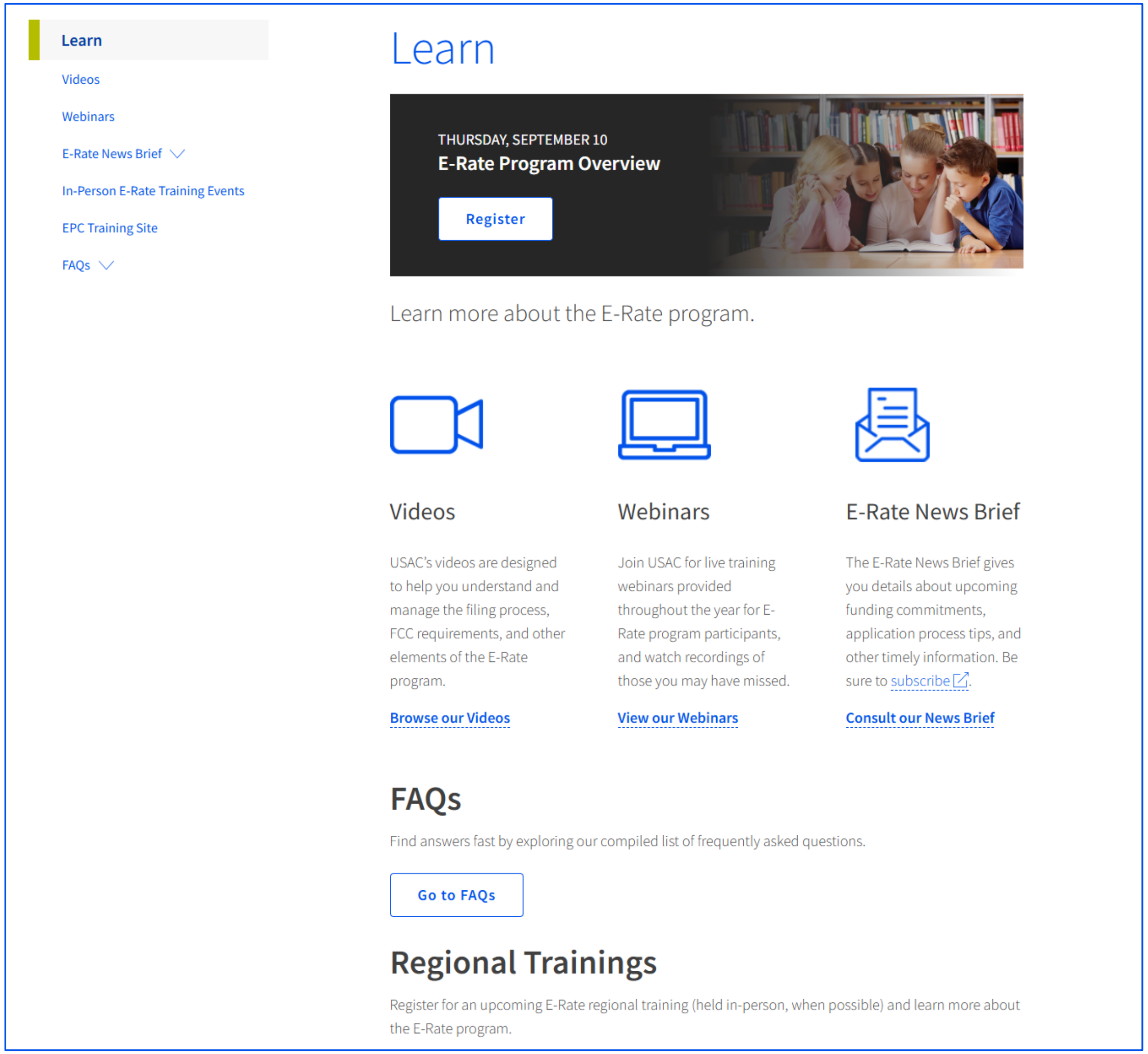
- New and past announcements
- How to appeal a decision
- What to expect form an audit
- Best practices for document retention
- A glossary of E-Rate specific terms
- Upcoming dates and deadlines



Learn Page

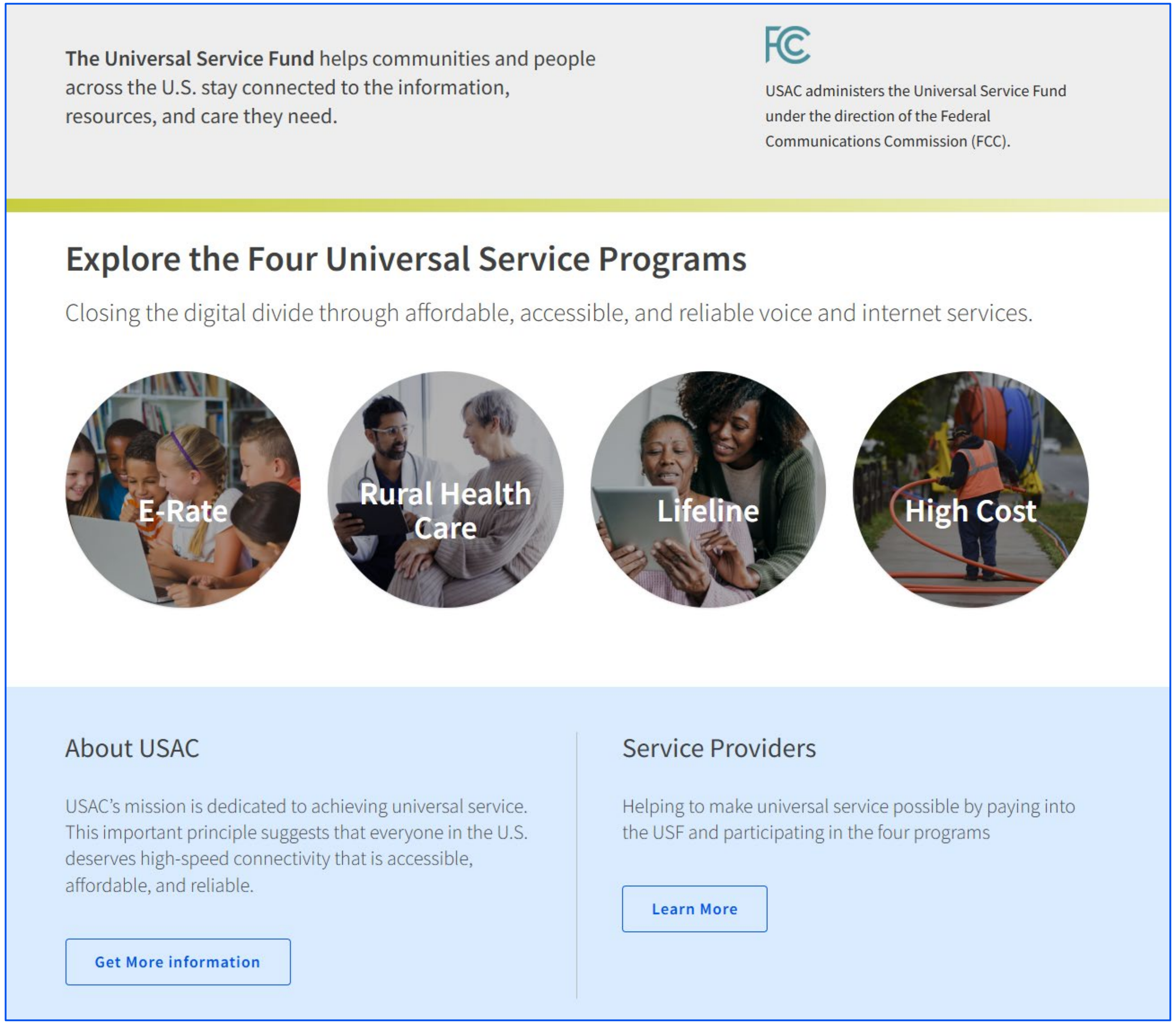
For new and experienced users:

- The library and sign-up center for all forms of training
  - Videos and eLMs
  - Webinars
  - In-Person training
  - News Brief
    - Sign up today!
  - FAQs
  - EPC-specific training



Accessing E-Rate's Website

- Accessible at USAC.org
- https://www.usac.org/e-rate/



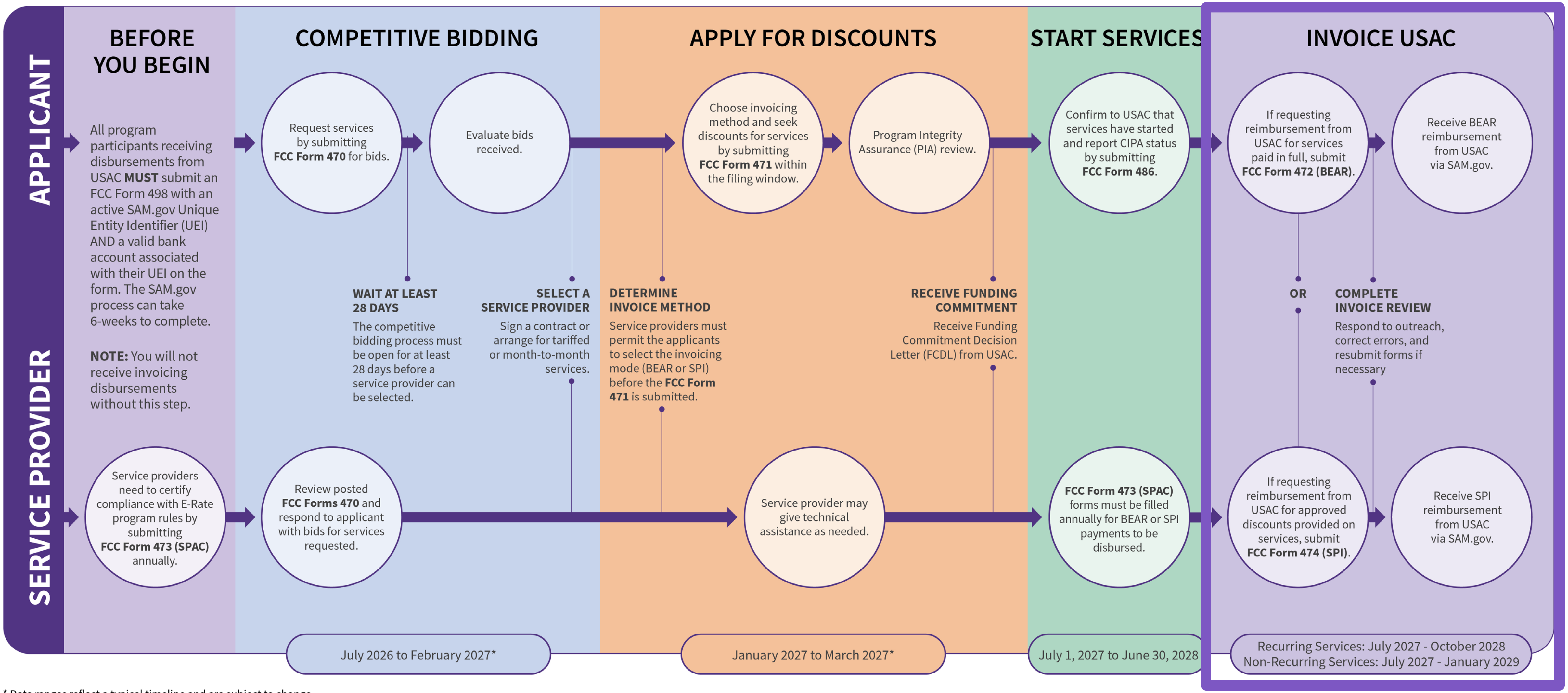
Invoicing

Agenda

- Invoicing Overview
- Preparing to Invoice
- Filing an FCC Form 498
- Filing an Invoice
- Invoice Reviews
- Record Retention and Open Data
- Key Takeaways

Invoicing Overview

What is the FCC Form 472/474?



* Date ranges reflect a typical timeline and are subject to change.

Two Methods of E-Rate Invoicing

Applicants in the E-Rate program can choose how to receive reimbursement from USAC for the discounted portion of the cost of their approved, eligible services and/or equipment.

BEAR Method

In the **BEAR (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement)** method, the applicant invoices USAC directly.

Before invoicing USAC for the discounted portion of the bill, applicant must have:

- Ensured that the Service Provider's SPAC was filed
- Filed an FCC Form 498 and obtained a 498 ID/SPIN
- Paid the service provider in full for approved eligible equipment and service costs
- Filed FCC Form 486 to certify service start and CIPA compliance

The service provider must have:

- Filed an FCC Form 473

Invoice path starts with applicants' FCC Form 471 but can be changed.

Service providers **MUST** file a SPAC for disbursements to occur. Applicants should verify a SPAC has been filed.

Applicant

Invoice via BEAR

Applicant files the FCC Form 472

Service Provider

Invoice via SPI

Service provider files the FCC Form 474

All equipment and/or services must be delivered and installed before the service delivery deadline.

Invoice Deadline Date

SPI Method

In the **SPI (Service Provider Invoicing)** method, the service provider invoices USAC.

Before invoicing USAC for the discounted portion of the bill, the service provider must have:

- Filed an FCC Form 498 and obtained a 498 ID/SPIN Certified an FCC Form 473
- Filed a Service Provider Annual Certification Form (SPAC)/FCC Form 473
- Billed the applicant for thenon-discounted portion of approved eligible equipmentand service costs

The applicant must have:

- Filed an FCC Form 486 to certify service start and CIPA compliance

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Preparing to Invoice

Before You Begin

- The invoicing mode/method **is the applicant's choice** and is made for each Funding Request Number (FRN), as of FY2026, the selection is made on the FCC Form 471.
  - A mode change can requested via FCC Form 500.
- Prior to 2026, the mode is set once USAC processes an invoice for an FRN.
- Applicants may only change the invoicing method once all disbursed funds have been returned.
- Applicants should notify their service providers of the invoicing method per FRN (FCC Form 472 or FCC Form 474).
- Both the applicant and the service provider should ensure that there is at least one full rights user for each BEN or SPIN. **Two full rights** users are recommended.

Before You Begin (cont.)

Decide the invoice frequency:

- Monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, one-time, etc.

Use the **Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL)** or information from the **Revised Funding Commitment Decision Letter (RFCDL)** to complete your invoice:

- Approved services, costs, and quantities
- FCC Form 471 number and FRN
- Approved Recipients of Service (ROS)

Before You Begin – FCDL Terms Defined

Total cost of the equipment and services before the E-Rate discount is applied = **Pre-Discount**

(Pre-Discount Cost) * (Discount rate) = **Discount Amount**

Discount Amount, can also be found in EPC as the "Funding Commitment Request." This is the amount eligible for funding and payment through the E-Rate program and for payment during the invoicing process.

(Pre-discount cost) - (Discount amount) = **Non-Discount Amount**

The amount the applicant pays for the equipment and services using non-E-Rate funds. The non-discount amount cannot be paid or credited by the service provider.

Before You Begin – FCDL Example

- **Pre-Discount:** (example: $18,360 billed to the applicant based on quantities and unit rates as applicable)
- **Discount Rate:** (example: 40%)
- **E-Rate Discounts Paid by USAC:** (example: $18,360 x .4 = $7,344)
- **Non-Discount Amount Paid by Applicant:** (example: $18,360 - $7,344 = $11,016)

FRN Calculation

Monthly Charges	
Total Monthly Recurring Charges	$1,530.00
Total Monthly Ineligible Charges	- $0.00
Total Monthly Eligible Charges	= $1,530.00
Total Number of Months of Service	x 12
Total Eligible Pre-Discount Recurring Charges	= $18,360.00

Total Requested Amount	
Total Eligible Pre-Discount Recurring Charges	$18,360.00
Total Eligible Pre-Discount One-Time Charges	+ $0.00
Total Pre-Discount Charges	= $18,360.00
Discount Rate	40%
Funding Commitment Request	= $7,344.00

Service Provider Verifications

The Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form (FCC Form 473)

- Service Providers file the SPAC annually certifying that they will comply with program rules and guidelines.
- Service Providers **must file** the Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) form **each funding year for each Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN).**
- The SPAC form must be filed before USAC can pay invoices.
- For step-by-step directions on how to complete the SPAC online, please see E-Rate Program FCC Form 473 (SPAC) User Guide.
- Utilize the Open Data FRN Status Tool FY2016 to verify the status of your SPAC form.

Select Invoicing Method (Either BEAR or SPI):

- Who chooses the invoicing mode/method?

Select Invoicing Method (Either BEAR or SPI):

- Who chooses the invoicing mode/method?

It is the applicant's choice on FCC Form 471 for each Funding Request Number (FRN).

Filing an Invoice

File Forms

Beginning on 9/8/2026, all program participants requesting reimbursement must have an active SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) on their FCC Form 498 AND a valid bank account associated with their UEI. **Service providers MUST file a SPAC for disbursements to occur.** Applicants should verify a SPAC has been filed.

To receive FCC Form 474 (BEAR) disbursements, applicants must:

- Use the invoicing mode selected on their FCC Form 471 or changed invoicing mode (FCC Form 500)
- Receive a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) or a have a Revised Funding Commitment Decision Letter (RFCDL)
- File an FCC Form 486 to certify service start and compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act

To receive FCC Form 472 (SPI) disbursements, service providers must:

- File an FCC Form 473 (SPAC) for each 498 ID / Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) every funding year payment is requested

Mind Your Deadline

- Invoices must be submitted before E-Rate's invoice filing deadline, generally:
  - October 28 for recurring services and
  - January 28 for non-recurring services
- Applicants can find their invoice deadline dates by searching their Funding Request Number (FRN) in the Records tab of the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC).
- Applicants may request a one-time automatic 120-day deadline extension if needed.

Pay for Services

- Applicants invoicing via BEAR must pay their service provider in full **before** invoicing USAC.
- Service providers invoicing via SPI must have received payment for the applicant's non-discounted portion.

Amounts invoiced to USAC must reflect **actual charges** and not committed amounts.

Know Your EPC Permissions

- There are three user permissions in EPC. Only **full-rights users** (the highest level) may submit and certify invoices.
  - USAC recommends that organizations have at least 2 full-rights users.
  - EPC account administrators set user permissions. Use the E-Rate FRN Status Tool FY 2016+ to identify your organization's account administrator.

Permission Level	View Invoices	Create Invoices	Certify Invoices	View Outreach	Respond to Outreach
Full	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partial	✓	✓		✓	
View Only	✓			✓	

For more information and helpful resources visit **usac.org/e-rate/learn**.

When to File an Invoice

- Invoices **must be submitted before** the invoice filing deadline.
  - Generally, the date is October 28 for recurring services and January 28 for non- recurring services.
  - Current Invoice Deadline Dates (IDD) are posted in EPC on the FRN detail screen.
- The IDD is no later than 120 days after the latest of the following:
  - The last date to receive service (or service delivery deadline).
  - The date of the FCC Form 486 Notification Letter.
  - The date of an RFCDL approving a post-commitment request or appeal of a previously denied or reduced funding request.
  - Filers are entitled to one, 120-day invoice deadline extension per FRN, requests can be made up to 15 days after the current IDD .

Invoice Deadline Extension

- Filers are entitled to one, 120-day invoice deadline extension per FRN.
- You can file an invoice deadline extension request even if you do not use or need it.
- You must file your invoice deadline extension request **BEFORE** the invoice deadline.
- Extension requests are filed by the applicant and service providers within EPC.
- If you miss the deadline to file an invoice or request an extension, you must request and be granted a waiver of the invoice filing deadline from the FCC.

Invoicing Reminders

- Payments:
    - BEAR Invoices: Applicant pays the service provider in full within 90 days of receiving services and **before** invoicing USAC.
    - SPI Invoices: Applicant pays the service provider their **non-discounted** portion within **90 days** of receiving services.
- Invoice USAC only for your FCC Form 471 approved eligible equipment and services, in the correct quantity and rates, and delivered only to the approved Recipient(s) of Service.
- Invoiced amount to USAC must be for **actual charges**, not the amount committed through the E-Rate program.
- Manual calculations for **prorated** amounts must be accurate.
- Billed rates **must not** exceed the contracted rate. USAC will **only pay** up to the **contracted rate**.
- Make sure all equipment purchased is **installed** and in use before the **Service Delivery Date**.
- Establish a process to **prevent duplicate** invoice submission.
- When closing an entity, make sure all invoices have been paid before putting in the request.

Invoicing Reminders – User Rights

Types of EPC Rights	Description
Full	Can view, prepare, submit, and certify the forms and any post-commitment requests. A Full Rights user **can provide responses** to outreach from USAC reviewers and sign/certify documents sent for review/response.
Partial	Can view and prepare invoices and post-commitment requests but **cannot** certify any forms **nor** reply to USAC outreach. All certifications **must be sent to a full rights user**.
View Only	Can view certain information about invoices or post-commitment transactions.

Note: There should never be a circumstance in which the view only or partial rights user submits invoices or certifies any forms. This includes completing a form and sending to the full rights user to submit. A certification signed by anyone other than a full right user will be denied.

Invoicing Reminders

- Contract Expiration date (CED) versus Invoice Deadline Date (IDD)
  - CED – USAC will not pay for services delivered outside of the contract expiration end date. For example, if the CED is 3/1/2025 and the funding year spans from 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025, we can only pay until the contract expiration date of 3/1.
  - Incorrect CED can be fixed via an FCC Form 500.
  - IDD is the last day to submit an invoice to USAC for an approved FRN.

Equipment

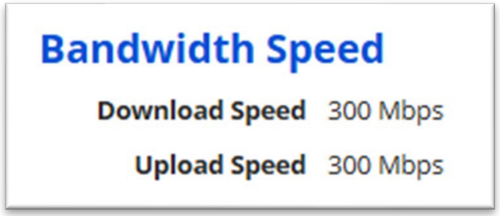
- If an applicant returns equipment to the service provider prior to invoicing USAC, neither the applicant nor service provider should invoice USAC for the cost of this equipment.
  - If an invoice for returned equipment has been submitted but not yet been paid, the invoice can be cancelled by opening a customer service case.
  - If an invoice for returned equipment has already been paid, disbursements must be returned to USAC. The USAC website contains more information on this process.
- If the approved equipment is no longer available, a Service Substitution is required to request the new model. The total commitment for that FRN cannot be increased.

Supplemental Fees

- Supplemental fees are defined as fees that are billed separately on the invoice and are covered within the commitment amount but may not be specifically listed on the FCC Form 471—such as cross-connections, access point fees, and/or demarcation points.
- Your invoice reviewer will validate your invoice against the equipment and services approved on your FCC Form 471. If the FCC Form 471 does not clearly identify these fees, you should consider proactively providing documentation such as a contract when submitting your invoice.
- Otherwise, you may be required to provide supporting documentation in response to outreach or an audit inquiry regarding these charges.

Supplemental Fee Example

- Listed on the FCC Form 471



Bandwidth Speed

Download Speed	300 Mbps
Upload Speed	300 Mbps

- FCC Form 471 FRN line-item detail 2410XXXXXXX:
  - Bandwidth speed of 300 Mbps for both download and upload. Monthly recurring charge (MRC) is $750.
- MRC Invoice submitted to USAC shows the following:
  - Internet speed 300 Mbps for $350
  - Ethernet Lan 2 Gbps for $400
    - If the 2 Gbps is not listed on the FCC Form 471, it may be considered a supplemental fee, and USAC will need to determine its eligibility. To streamline the process, it is beneficial to include supporting documentation — such as the contract and the specific page that supports the charge — with your invoice submission. Otherwise, you may be required to provide it later in response to an outreach or during an audit.

Invoicing User Rights Levels Pop Quiz

- What is the only rights level that can:
  - View, prepare, submit, and certify the forms and any post-commitment requests.
  - Provide responses to outreach from USAC reviewers and sign/certify documents sent for review/response.
  - Act as a representative/agent of the entity and are liable for the actions taken as its representative/agent.

Invoicing User Rights Levels

- What is the only rights level that can:
  - View, prepare, submit, and certify the forms and any post-commitment requests.
  - Provide responses to outreach from USAC reviewers and sign/certify documents sent for review/response.
  - Act as a representative/agent of the entity and are liable for the actions taken as its representative/agent.

Only full rights users

Invoice Reviews

Invoice Review

- All invoices undergo a series of automated reviews to validate information such as:
  - FCC Form 471 number
  - Discount percentage
  - Available funding
  - Funding Request Number (FRN)
  - Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form (FCC Form 473)
  - Invoice Deadline Date (IDD) and Service Delivery Deadline (SDD)
- Errors in any of the above will prevent customers from submitting their invoice in EPC or result in rejection.
- Invoices may also go through a manual review process.

Manual Invoice Review: Validation

Some items the reviewer verifies:

- The customer's bill accurately reflects the invoiced amount
- Entities listed on bills are approved Recipients of Service on the approved FCC Form 471
- Amount requested is supported by the bills submitted
- The Service Provider on the bill must match the FCC Form 471, if it does not , see web for details under 499
- Service provider named on the bills matches the FRN
- Bandwidth speeds
- Equipment and services are eligible and approved on the FCC Form 471's Funding Commitment Decision Letter.
    - Ineligible equipment and services that are not removed at submission are removed during the invoice review.
    - Changes in services or equipment not received requires USAC-approval via a service substitution.
    - Ensure that service substitution requests are submitted to the E-Rate program for approval when the original eligible equipment and services requested are substituted.
    - Ensure that processes are in place to guarantee that the invoiced services match the contracted services.

Manual Invoice Review: Service Certification

- Some manual reviews require additional documentation to demonstrate:
    - Payment of the non-discounted portion by the applicant.
    - That the invoiced equipment and/or services were delivered and installed.
    - Whether progress payments were included in the contract.
    - That the requested amount is for eligible equipment and/or services.
- **Applicants** with **full rights access** will receive a notification directing them to the Communications tab in EPC.
    - This communication will contain a Service Certification form.
- **Only an Applicant full rights user** can respond, sign, and certify the Service Certification USAC may request supporting documentation from the applicant or service provider.
- Responses are due by the “Response Requirement Date.”
- Timely responses are critical — failure to respond may result in invoice denial.
- The Service Certification must be completed and submitted directly only by the full rights user of the applicant.

Manual Invoice Review: Outreach

- USAC may conduct outreach to request additional information / documentation to make a disbursement decision.
- Outreach is conducted **A**ccurately, **C**ompletely and **T**imely, which allows the review to occur and payments to be made.
- You have seven calendar days to respond.
- You may request a seven-day extension.
- Lack of response may result in invoice denial.

Invoice Modification and Denials

- Automated and Manual Invoice reviews can result in:
  - Approval
  - Modification
  - Denial
- Common Reasons for Modification:
  - Discounts applied incorrectly
  - Removal of ineligible equipment and services
  - Discrepancy in quantity
  - Ineligible Recipients Of Service
  - Services for a future date not yet received

Common Causes for Invoice Denial

- Documentation
  - Service certification is invalid/incomplete
    - If not signed by full rights user
  - No response, incomplete response and/or incomplete documentation provided as a response to outreach
  - Inaccurate invoice submission
    - Outside the eligible timeframe
    - Bills do not support the invoiced amount
    - Duplicate submission
    - Ineligible equipment and/or services
- FCC Form 471
  - Recipients of Service not approved on the FCC Form 471
  - Charges not approved on the FCC Form 471
  - Service provider bill does not match the approved FCC Form 471 (i.e., speed mismatch)

Invoice Decision Codes

- USAC processes the invoice request and issues its invoicing decision.
- When the invoice mode is BEAR, the applicant and the service provider receive a copy of the FCC Form 472 BEAR Notification Letter.
- Service providers will receive a remittance statement after filing a SPI Form.
- Invoice Decision Codes explain the reason for any modifications or denials.
- Invoice information is also available in Open Data.
- For more details on a particular invoice, contact the USAC Customer Service Center.

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Available for Public Use

Decision Code	Plain Language Decision Explanation	Historical Decision Explanation (Letters issued before October 1, 2020)
40	Either a Customer Billed Date or a Shipping Date to Customer must be entered on this invoice line.	Either Billed Date or Shipped Date must be entered.
41	Either a Customer Billed Date or a Shipping Date to Customer, but not both, must be entered on this invoice line.	Both Bill and Ship Date cannot be entered
42	The Total (Undiscounted) Amount was not provided on the invoice line.	Total (Undiscounted) Amount for Service per FRN (Not Provided)
44	The Discount Amount Billed to SLC was not provided on the invoice line.	Discount Amount Billed to SLC (Null or Zero)
48	The undiscounted amount multiplied by the discount percentage for this FRN is lower than the requested invoice amount.	Discount Amt. Billed Not Valid
60	The service provider has not certified an FCC Form 473 for the funding year.	Service provider must be certified
67	The Shipping Date to Customer is after the Contract Expiration Date or the Service End Date (whichever is earlier).	Ship Date > [%s] days (486) Early Term Dt
68	The Shipping Date to Customer is after the Contract Expiration Date or the Service End Date (whichever is earlier).	Ship Date> [%s] days 471 Term or Cnt Ext
75	The Customer Billed Date entered on the invoice line is outside of the funding year for this FRN.	Billed Date after [%s] fund yr;one time cost
76	The Customer Billed Date entered on the invoice line is outside of the funding year for this FRN.	Billed Date after [%s] fund yr;mnthly cost
77	The Shipping Date to Customer entered on the invoice line is outside of the funding year for this FRN.	Shipped Date after [%s] fund yr;one time cost
78	The Shipping Date to Customer entered on the invoice line is outside of the funding year for this FRN.	Shipped Date after [%s] fund yr;mnthly cost
80	This invoice was submitted after the invoicing deadline for the FRN.	Invoice Received Date is later than Invoice Received Extension Date for FRN
81	The Customer Billed Date entered on the invoice line is after the Invoice Deadline Date.	Bill Date [%s] > [%s] Billed Extension Date; one time cost

Invoicing Appeals

- If your timely-filed invoice is rejected or modified, you have two options:
  - If it is before the Invoice Deadline Date, resubmit a corrected invoice.
  - If it is after the Invoice Deadline Date, you have the right to appeal the decision.
- Appeals must be filed **first** with USAC.
- You have **60 days** to appeal to USAC.
- Appeals filed more than 60 days after the decision date are **automatically dismissed,** and a waiver must be filed with the FCC.
- Parties now have a one-time, 60-day grace period to resubmit corrected versions of invoices that were timely filed before the invoice filing deadline but rejected by USAC after the invoicing deadline
- If USAC denies the appeal, you have **60 days** to appeal that denial to the FCC.
- Waivers of the Commission's rules, such as the invoice deadline rule, can only be sought from the FCC. An appeal of a timely-filed invoice that is rejected or modified does **not** require a waiver of the invoice deadline rule.
- Additional information on the appeals and waivers is available on USAC's website.

Record Retention and Open Data

Documentation: Reconciliation Worksheet

Maintain a reconciliation worksheet that includes:

- Service provider bill number
- Billed service/product
- Quantity and per unit cost
- Extended billed amount

Ensure:

- Sum of all the extended bill amounts agrees to the total (undiscounted).
- Amount for equipment or service requested on the BEAR form can be traced to the actual copies of the service provider bills.

Service Provider Bills				
Service Provider Bill	Billed Service/Product	Billed Qty	Billed Per Unit Cost	Billed Extended Cost
INV101	Product A	5	$ 10.00	$ 50.00
INV102	Product B	5	$ 15.00	$ 75.00
INV103	Product C	5	$ 20.00	$ 100.00
INV104	Product D	5	$ 25.00	$ 125.00
INV105	Product E	5	$ 30.00	$ 150.00
			Total Eligible (undiscounted) Amount for Service on BEAR	**$ 500.00**

Locating Key Invoice Information

Current Invoice Deadline Date and/or Service Delivery Deadline Information

- EPC: The Invoice Deadline Date and Service Delivery Date are included in the Funding Commitment Decision Letter and Revised Funding Commitment Decision Letter.
- Dataset: E-Rate Request for Discount on Services: FRN Status
  - Column D "form version" field filter should be set to "Current." Disbursement Data: E-Rate Invoice Disbursements Data Lookup Tool

General Open Data Information and Training

- Open Data Video Guides and Open Data Platform

Outreach Response

- How should you respond to Outreach?

  Hint:
  A.C.T

Outreach Response

- How should you respond to Outreach?

  Accurately, Completely, and Timely

Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways

- An IDD extension request can be submitted up to 15 days after the Invoice Deadline Date.
- Request a one-time invoice deadline extension, even if you do not anticipate needing one.
- Only a full rights user can certify forms.
- Only invoice for the specific equipment and services at the quantities and rates approved and only for the approved Recipients of Service (ROS) on your FCC Form 471.
- Ensure you have the accurate FCC Form 471, FRN, FCDL/RFCDL, discount rate, approved cost of service, calculations and invoice amount.
- Remove ineligible items (equipment and services not approved on FCC Form 471, for FY and ROS).
- Establish a process to prevent duplicate invoice submission.
- Retain your supporting documentation and bills for all invoices for at least 10 years.
- Respond in a timely manner to all outreaches to expedite your payment.
- Parties have 60 days to appeal decisions to USAC and 60 days from the date of the USAC appeal decision to appeal to the FCC. Waivers should be filed directly with the FCC.
- Parties have a one-time, 60-day grace period to resubmit corrected versions of invoices that were timely filed before the invoice filing deadline but rejected by USAC after the invoicing deadlin

Resources

- Prepare to Invoice
- E-Rate Tips to Speed Up Disbursements
- Applicant Invoicing
- Service Provider Invoicing
- Open Data
- Applicant 498ID
- Webinars & Trainings
- E-Rate News Brief
- SPI Invoice Submission Demo
- BEAR Invoice Submission Demo
- Glossary of Terms
- EPC Invoice Process
- Practice Forms

Questions?

Thank you for taking the time to attend today's 2026 Fall E-Rate Training!

All of today's training participants will receive a survey to share your feedback about today's training. Please let us know your thoughts.

For more information on the E-Rate program, please subscribe to the E-Rate News Brief or register for one of the upcoming webinars.

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