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Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Tribal Outreach

January 2023 USAC Tribal Newsletter

January 27, 2023

Dear Tribal Leader,

The [Universal Service Administrative Company](#) (USAC) is committed to engaging with Tribal partners in our mission to provide universal service. Beginning in February, USAC will host a monthly cross-program Tribal teleconference.

- February 7, 2023 at 4 p.m. ET: Tribal Teleconference – [Register](#)

New Tribal Liaison

We're pleased to introduce Gem Shandiin Labarta (Navajo) as USAC's new Tribal Liaison. Ms. Labarta joined USAC in November 2022. She has previously worked for Indian Health Services, Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, and Torres Martinez Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Please feel free to reach out to her with any questions you may have at TribalLiaison@usac.org.

E-Rate

The [E-Rate program](#) provides funding to ensure that schools and libraries can obtain affordable, high-speed broadband services and internet equipment to connect today's students and library patrons with next-generation learning opportunities and services.

E-Rate Tribal Notice

On January 26, 2023, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced that it will consider a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking at the February 16 open meeting, seeking comment on ways to improve the E-Rate program rules and encourage greater Tribal participation in the E-Rate program. A copy of the [proposed draft Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) is available on the FCC's website. This document is released as part of a "permit-but-disclose" proceeding. Any presentations or views on the subject expressed to the FCC or its staff, including by email, must be filed in CC Docket No. 02-6, accessible at [the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System](#), and in accordance with the ex parte rules found at 47 CFR § 1.1200 et seq.

E-Rate Application Filing Window Now Open

The Funding Year (FY) 2023 FCC Form 471 (Apply for Discounts) application filing window opened on **Wednesday, January 18, 2023** and closes on Tuesday, March 28, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Tuesday, February 28, 2023 is the last date to submit and certify your Competitive Bidding Form (FCC Form 470) to start the [competitive bidding process](#) and still wait the required minimum 28-day period before submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471 by the March 28, 2023 filing window deadline.

The E-Rate competitive bidding form and application must be filed in the [E-Rate Productivity Center](#) (EPC), the E-Rate account and management online system. The dates and times above apply to the time the form is certified in

EPC. If you complete all the required information on the form before the deadline but certify it after the deadline, the form will not be considered as timely filed.

Get Started - File Early

USAC recommends that you submit your program application (FCC Form 471) as early in the application filing window as possible so USAC can begin the processes necessary to review your applications and issue timely funding commitment decisions. To start the FY2023 [application filing process](#), follow the steps below.

- **Gain EPC Access** – EPC is the account and application management portal for the E-Rate program.
- **First-time Filers** – If you are new to the E-Rate program, you will need a user account in EPC. For security purposes, you will also need credentials for One Portal, our multi-factor authentication system. Call the Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100 to set up your organization's EPC profile and your account administrator.
- **Review the Eligible Services List** – The Eligible Services List (ESL) for each funding year provides guidance on the eligibility of products and services under the E-Rate program.
 - [FY2023 Eligible Services List](#) (PDF)
 - [ESL Glossary](#) (PDF)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - Visit the [Eligible Services List](#) page
 - View the FY2023 E-Rate Eligible Services [webinar recording](#) (Jan. 5, 2023)
- **Competitive Bidding (FCC Form 470)**
 - Start the [Competitive Bidding Process](#) by filing your [FCC Form 470](#), which is the first form in the application process.
 - Remember that **you must wait the required minimum 28-day period** after filing the FCC Form 470 before entering into an agreement with your selected service provider(s) and filing your FCC Form 471 application(s).
 - Review the Related User Guides:
 - [FCC Form 470 Filing EPC System Guide FY2022-FY2023](#) (PDF).
 - [FCC Form 470 Services Guiding Statements Reference Table \(FY2023\)](#) (PDF)
 - Instructional videos on FCC Form 470 are available online:
 - [How to File an FCC Form 470](#) (26:04 min.)
 - [How to Search for FCC Form 470](#) (12:25 min.)
 - [E-Rate Competitive Bidding Process](#) (5:00 min.)
- **Submit Your Application (FCC Form 471)**
 - Apply for E-Rate funding by submitting and certifying your FY2023 FCC Form 471, **before the March 28, 2023**, filing window deadline.
 - Watch the [FCC Form 471 video series](#) for step-by-step filing guidance.
 - Bulk upload templates are available on the [FCC Form 471 filing page](#) for applicants with large numbers of eligible services and/or large numbers of recipients of service.

E-Rate Tribal Libraries Pilot Program

In 2022, the FCC adopted a Report and Order ([Tribal Library Order](#)), updating the definition of a library and clarifying that Tribal libraries are eligible for support through the E-Rate program. To support newly eligible Tribal libraries, the FCC and USAC created the [E-Rate Tribal Library Pilot Program](#), a hands-on approach to provide training, resources, and guidance to first-time E-Rate applicants. USAC is now working with several first time Tribal library E-Rate applicants, providing potential applicants with one-on-one assistance in all aspects of preparing, applying, and receiving E-Rate support during the FY2023 funding year. If you know of any Tribal libraries that might be interested in learning more about funding from the E-Rate program, but did not sign up for the pilot program, please contact TribalTraining@usac.org to get started.

Rural Health Care

The [Rural Health Care](#) (RHC) program provides funding to eligible health care providers to reduce the cost of eligible telehealth broadband and telecom services. RHC has two primary programs: the [Healthcare Connect Fund \(HCF\) Program](#) and the [Telecommunications \(Telecom\) Program](#).

The FY2023 filing window opened December 1, 2022 and closes April 3, 2023. This means that you can submit your funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) no later than 11:59 p.m. ET April 3, 2023. We highly encourage you to submit your funding requests as early as possible in the filing window. Learn more about [filing windows](#).

Tuesday, February 28, 2023, Health care providers should submit their FCC Forms 461 and 465 to ensure that they can be posted with sufficient time for the minimum 28-day competitive bidding period.

Lifeline

The [Lifeline program](#) offers a monthly benefit of up to \$34.25 off phone, internet, or bundled services for eligible subscribers living on Tribal lands. Subscribers can receive this benefit after confirming their eligibility to participate in the program and receiving service from an eligible telecommunications carrier.

To learn more about Lifeline, [register for our next monthly webinar](#) on **February 8, 2023**.

ACP

The [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) (ACP) provides eligible households with a discount on broadband service and connected devices.

Households who qualify for ACP and are located on qualifying Tribal lands can receive discounts of up to \$75 per month toward internet service and a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased from a participating provider. The program also provides discounts of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible residents on non-Tribal lands. Visit the [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) website to learn more information and apply for discounts.

Key Dates and Trainings

E-Rate

Tuesday, February 7, 2023, the Tribal Liaison and the E-Rate team will host the Tribal teleconference on E-Rate specific updates at 4:00 p.m. ET – [Register](#).

Tuesday, February 28, 2023 is the last date to submit and certify an FCC Form 470 and still wait the required minimum 28-day period before filing your FCC Form 471 funding application.

Tuesday, March 28, 2023, the FY2023 FCC Form 471 application filing window closes at 11:59 p.m. ET.

RHC

Wednesday, February 8, 2023, RHC will host their [Healthcare Connect Fund Program](#) office hours webinar at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).

Wednesday, February 15, 2023, RHC will host their [Telecommunications Program](#) office hours webinar at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).

Tuesday, February 28, 2023, Health care providers should submit their FCC Forms 461 and 465 to ensure that they can be posted with sufficient time for the minimum 28-day competitive bidding period.

Monday, April 3, 2023, the FY2023 filing window for FCC Forms 462 or 466 closes.

Lifeline/ACP

Wednesday, February 8, 2023, Lifeline will host their monthly webinar at 3 p.m. ET – [Register](#).

E-Rate Program Technical Assistance

The USAC Customer Service Center (CSC) provides customer service for the Universal Service Fund (USF) programs, including the E-Rate program, with specialized agents trained to answer your E-Rate program questions.

Contact the CSC at (888) 203-8100 from 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. ET Monday through Friday for assistance, or open a customer service case in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC), if or once you are a registered user.

Questions or Suggestions?

Contact the USAC Tribal Liaison at TribalLiaison@usac.org.

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