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Universal Service Administrative Co.

April 2025 Tribal Nation Newsletter

April 30, 2025 | University Service Administrative Company (USAC)

Tribal Nation News

USAC's May Tribal Teleconference will provide an overview of the High Cost program and the Connect America Fund with time for Q&A. Please join us on **Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 4 p.m. ET** – Register.

Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program (T-LEAP)

Tribal libraries and Tribal college and university (TCU) libraries can receive direct support in navigating the E-Rate application process, including one-on-one assistance in preparing applications, applying to the program, and receiving E-Rate support.

To learn more, please visit the T-LEAP page or contact the USAC Tribal Liaison. Interested Tribal libraries can sign up here year-round.

E-Rate

FY2025 Window Waiver Requests

If you plan to request a waiver of the Funding Year (FY) 2025 application filing window deadline, be sure to certify and submit your FCC Form 471 in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) before you file your waiver request with the FCC. Note that you will receive an out-of-window status notification after you certify your form. If the waiver request is granted, USAC will treat the FCC Form 471 as timely filed during the

application filing window and will process the form. See the E-Rate Appeals Waiver Guide.

Interim SPIN and RAL

If you used the interim Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) 143666666 to submit your FY2025 funding requests, submit a Receipt Acknowledgement Letter (RAL) modification request to provide the name and SPIN for your selected service provider(s). View the FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter Modification Guide.

RAL Modification Requests and Post-Commitment Corrections

USAC issues an FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgement Letter (RAL) to both the applicant and service provider(s) after an FCC Form 471 application is submitted and certified through EPC. The letter contains many of the details submitted on the FCC Form 471 and provides a means to correct any errors or mistakes. If you were not able to make all the appropriate updates to your applicant profile in EPC before the close of the EPC FCC Form 471 administrative window, you can provide updated information by filing a RAL Modification Request after submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471 application(s) but **before** you receive your Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL).

Some FCC Form 471 applications are submitted with multiple types of equipment placed on a single funding request (FRN) Line Item, which can slow down the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review process. Applicants can **use the RAL Modification Request process** to separate unique types of equipment into separate FRN Line Items, which will help reviewers complete the FCC Form 471 form reviews more quickly.

Applicants receive the RAL in their EPC Newsfeed after submitting and certifying an FCC Form 471. The RAL Modification function in EPC allows applicants to provide specific information in an organized format, which makes it easier for PIA reviewers to locate and understand the changes requested. Go to the Ministerial & Clerical Errors page to see the types of changes that are permitted for the FCC Form 471. To learn how to submit modification requests for FCC Form(s) 471, view the FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter Modification Guide.

If USAC has issued an FCDL, you will need to submit modifications through a post-commitment request such as a Service Substitution request, a SPIN Change request, an FCC Form 500, or an Appeal. You will not be able to use the RAL modification request after a FCDL has been issued for the FCC Form 471.

2025 Training and Outreach

USAC is coming to an event near you in 2025. Our next stop will be at the American Library Association (ALA) Conference (Pennsylvania) from June 26-30, 2025. Event link.

Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program

On January 17, 2025, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Public Notice announcing the participants selected for the Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program (Pilot Program). Eight Tribal entities were selected to participate in the Pilot program. The Pilot Program funding application filing window opened on March 18 and will run through September 15, 2025. USAC is no longer accepting applications to participate in the Pilot Program. To learn more, visit USAC's Cybersecurity Pilot Program webpages.

Rural Healthcare

FY2026 Filing Window Dates Announced

The funding year (FY) 2026 funding request filing window will open on December 1, 2025, and close on April 1, 2026. As a reminder, applicants can start submitting their FCC Forms 461 and 465 to request services and begin the competitive bidding process on July 1, 2025. View the FY2026 Program Calendar.

FCC Releases Order DA 25-224 Extending the FY2025 Filing Window Deadline to June 2, 2025

On March 13, 2025, the FCC released FCC Order DA 25-224 extending the deadline for the FY2025 Application Filing Window to June 2, 2025. This means all funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on June 2, 2025. We highly encourage applicants to submit their funding requests as early as possible in the filing window. Visit USAC's website for more information about filing windows.

Please use the following online resources to assist you with submitting your funding requests:

Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program

- Step 4: Submit Funding Requests webpage
- Welcome to RHC Connect – FCC Form 462 webpage
- FCC Form 462 User Guide
- HCF Program Funding Requests (FCC Form 462) self-guided training module

Telecommunication (Telecom) Program

- Step 4: Submit Funding Requests webpage
- Welcome to RHC Connect – FCC Form 466 webpage
- FCC Form 466 User Guide
- Telecom Program Funding Requests (FCC Form 466) self-guided training module

Lifeline

New Continued Eligibility Status Report in NLAD

On May 21, USAC will implement a new, updated, streamlined, and unified **Continued Eligibility Status Report** in the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) production environment. Part of these changes include a new error code and updated description type. As of April 23, the new report has been available for service providers to test in the staging environment.

For complete details on the upcoming enhancement, service providers can refer to the April 17 bulletin from USAC available on the Announcements page.

Updated Lifeline Income Qualifications for 2025

USAC has updated its forms, systems, and resources to reflect the 2025 Federal Poverty Guidelines which were released by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) earlier this year. Consumers qualify for the Lifeline benefit if their income is at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Service providers may review the following pages for more information:

- The Consumer Eligibility page
- The Do I Qualify page for consumers on LifelineSupport.org
- The National Verifier online application and the updated paper forms (English and Spanish)

Service providers should update their forms and systems **as soon as possible** to reflect this update. Providers operating in NLAD opt-out states (California, Oregon, and Texas) should follow their state's guidance.

New Lifeline Benefit Flyers

USAC has released a new and updated suite of Lifeline standard benefit flyers, strategically designed to serve as a comprehensive resource for consumers, the organizations that support them, and service providers. These refreshed flyers aim to promote consumer awareness and understanding by sharing key information about the program and available benefits.

The new flyer suite is available on the Community Education page on LifelineSupport.org and includes:

- **Lifeline Overview** – provides high-level overview of the program, how to qualify, and how to get the benefit
- **How to Apply** – shares information on how to apply for the benefit and key information to include on the application
- **Manage Your Lifeline Benefit** – focuses on what a consumer needs to know after they start receiving the benefit, including the annual recertification requirement

Consumer advocacy groups, social service agencies, service providers, and other organizations that support Lifeline consumers are encouraged to share these flyers and help educate eligible consumers about the benefit. USAC will release the flyer suite in Spanish soon and will inform stakeholders once available.

Key Dates and Trainings

High Cost and Tribal | High Cost 101
May 13, 2025, at 4 p.m. ET – Register >

E-Rate | Beginning E-Rate Services Webinar
May 15, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – Register >

RHC | FY2025 Healthcare Connect Fund Office Hours #5
May 7, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – Register >

RHC | FY2025 Telecom Office Hours #5
May 14, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – Register >

Lifeline | Getting Started as a New Company with Lifeline
May 14, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET – Register >

USF Program Technical Assistance

The USAC Customer Service Center (CSC) provides customer service for all USF programs. Visit the Contact USAC page to get in touch with specialized agents trained in the specifics of each program.

Questions or suggestions? Contact USAC's Tribal Liaison at TribalLiaison@usac.org.

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