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August 2026 Tribal Nation Newsletter

August 31, 2026 | Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)



Tribal Nation News

Notes from USAC's Tribal Liaison

Join the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) and the Lifeline team for the September Tribal Teleconference. We will provide an overview of the Eligible Telecommunication Carriers (ETC) process and requirements for the Lifeline program with time for Q&A.

Please join us on **Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 4 p.m. ET** – [Register](#).

USAC Postpones Transition to SAM.gov Banking Information

USAC will postpone the transition to SAM.gov banking information to perform additional testing and validation for a smooth stakeholder transition.

Once a new transition date is determined, USAC will share that information.

August invoices will continue to be paid using USAC's current process and the banking information included on the FCC Form 498. USAC will provide an update in early September.

Prepare for the Coming Transition

All Service Providers and E-Rate applicants who use the Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) invoicing method should still promptly complete the SAM.gov registration process and add their active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) to their FCC Form 498. Note: the SAM.gov registration process can take up to six weeks to complete.

After the transition, any service provider or E-Rate BEAR filer who does not have a completed SAM.gov registration and an active UEI on their FCC Form 498 will be able to submit USF program

invoices but will not receive remittance until they complete the SAM.gov and UEI processes.

Additional Information

For background information about USAC's requirement to use SAM.gov registration, see [this USAC newsletter](#). To learn more about USAC's transition to using SAM.gov payment data for USF invoices, visit [USAC's SAM.gov UEI Requirement webpage](#).

For questions about SAM.gov registration or associated bank accounts, please visit the [SAM.gov website](#).

E-Rate

Summer Deferral Period Ends September 11

Our summer deferral contact period is the Friday before Memorial Day through the Friday after Labor Day. For 2026, the summer deferral contact period began May 22 and will end **Friday, September 11**. If participants were unable to respond during this period, the form or request will be placed in a deferred status. Once the deferral period ends, USAC will continue its regular review process and, if it cannot make contact with applicants, it will continue reviewing with the information provided, which may result in a reduction or denial of funding.

Requesting Service Delivery Deadline Extensions for FY2025 Non-Recurring Services (Other Than Special Construction)

The deadline for delivery and installation of non-recurring services (e.g., installations, equipment) is **Wednesday, September 30, 2026**, following the close of the funding year.

This [service delivery deadline](#) (SDD) can be extended for up to one year under certain circumstances through an extension request. In some cases, the extension will be automatically made based on the Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) date or the revised Funding Commitment Decision Letter (RFCDL) date.

Requesting Extensions

Service providers who are (1) unable to meet their service delivery deadline for reasons beyond their control or are (2) unwilling to complete delivery and installation because USAC withheld invoice payments on the services for more than 60 days can ask the affected applicants to request a one-year extension with USAC.

Applicants can request the one-year extension by completing and certifying an [FCC Form 500](#) (Funding Commitment Adjustment Request Form) on or before September 30, 2026, for FY2025 non-recurring services. If your service delivery deadline for a Funding Request Number (FRN) is approved and the deadline is extended to September 30, 2027, USAC will automatically extend the invoice deadline for that FRN to January 28, 2028. There is no need to submit an invoice deadline date (IDD) extension request for an extended FRN when submitting an SDD extension request. If you do submit an IDD extension request at the same time, it will count towards your one-time invoicing extension, and you will not be able to request a second IDD extension request in the future.

In-Person Training

USAC is coming to an event near you in 2026. E-Rate experts will provide training, discuss program updates, and answer questions from new and experienced participants. Registration is still open for these in-person training events.

- E-Rate Training – Phoenix, AZ: **September 15, 2026**, at the Salvation Army Kroc Center, 1375 E. Broadway Road, Phoenix, AZ. [Register](#).
- E-Rate Training – Washington, DC: **September 24, 2026**, at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) headquarters, 45 L Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. [Register](#).
 - The training will also be available live on the FCC's YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/@FCC>.

Reminders

For more information and reminders about requesting extensions, competitive bidding tips and resources, and FY2026 funding commitments, please review the [August 2026 E-Rate News Brief](#).

If you are Tribal library or TCU library interested in applying for E-Rate, consider joining [T-LEAP](#).

[Rural Health Care](#)

FY2025 HCF Annual Report Due September 30, 2026

Per [FCC Order 19-78](#), to supplement the information collected from forms filed by the healthcare provider (HCP), the FCC requires all Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) participants who received funding in funding year (FY) 2025 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) to submit information to USAC about the telehealth applications used during the funding year. All HCF Program participants, both individual and consortia, must submit an annual report for each funding year in which they receive HCF Program support and for the life of a supported facility or service for which the program participant received large upfront payments. Failure to submit the required annual report(s) by the deadline may result in the denial of RHC program funding.

For FY2025, annual reports should be submitted in RHC Connect. Please use the [RHC Connect Annual Report User Guide](#) and visit the [Submit Annual Report](#) webpage to assist you with your submission.

My Portal is Unavailable to External Users

Please be advised that as of July 31, 2026, My Portal is no longer available. User data has been migrated to RHC Connect, the RHC online application system. For information for the last 10 funding years, please continue to use [Open Data](#) as a resource.

In some circumstances, you may be able to request old My Portal documents by reaching out to the [RHC Customer Service Center](#).

Key Dates and Trainings

Tribal Teleconference with Lifeline

Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#) >

RHC | Telecom Program Invoicing Best Practices

Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#) >

RHC | FY2026 Funding Requests Update

Wednesday, September 16, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#) >

RHC | Q3 Service Provider Training

Wednesday, September 23, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#) >

Lifeline | Lifeline Compliance

Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 3 p.m. ET – [Register](#) >

E-Rate | E-Rate Program Overview

Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 2 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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