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Universal Service  
Administrative Co.

Tribal Outreach

## February 2024 USAC Tribal Nation Newsletter

February 29, 2024

[Universal Service Administrative Company's](#) (USAC) March Tribal Teleconference, hosted with the Lifeline program team, will provide a National Verifier (NV) system overview, including time for questions and answers. Please join the teleconference on **Tuesday, March 12, 2024, at 4 p.m. ET** – [Register](#).

### E-Rate

#### **Invoicing Deadlines**

If you need additional time to complete your invoicing process and have not already received an extension, you can request a 120-day [extension](#) of your invoicing deadline.

#### **Enhanced E-Rate Benefits for Funding Year 2024**

- **Libraries:** The FCC implemented a competitive bidding exemption for all libraries seeking E-Rate support for Category Two (C2) equipment/services that total a pre-discount price of \$3,600 or less per library per funding year (FY) (FY2024 and forward). Visit the [E-Rate Library FAQs](#) page to learn more.
- **School Bus Wi-Fi Equipment/Services Now Eligible:** The FCC expanded E-Rate eligible services to include equipment and services for Wi-Fi and other similar access technologies on school buses starting in FY2024. This includes right-to-use licenses and software needed to operate bus Wi-Fi devices. Learn more in the School Bus Wi-Fi updates in the [Eligible Services FAQs](#).
- **Tribal Entities:** The FCC updated program definitions, defined Tribal entities, made Tribal College and University (TCU) libraries that also serve as a public library eligible for E-Rate, increased the discount rate for C2 services for Tribal libraries at the highest discount level (90 percent) beginning FY2024, and increased the C2 budget floor (now \$55,000) for Tribal libraries (see [FCC 23-56](#) issued on July 21, 2023). Learn more in the Tribal section of the [E-Rate Library FAQs](#).

#### **FY 2024 Application Filing Window Closes on March 27, 2024**

The E-Rate program's filing window for FY 2024 will close on March 27, 2024. This means all funding applications (FCC Form 471) must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on March 27, 2024, to be considered for funding. We encourage you to submit your funding applications as early as possible.

#### **E-Rate Customer Service Center Extends Hours**

The Customer Service Center (CSC) has added additional hours to support applicants in advance of the close of the FY2024 FCC Form 471 application filing window. The application filing window will close Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 11:59:59 p.m. ET.

The extended hours for the CSC are as follows:

- Saturday, March 23 – 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sunday, March 24 – 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Monday, March 25 – 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- Tuesday, March 26 – 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 27 – 8 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.

To learn more about important filing dates, tips, and resources for applying to E-Rate, please see the [February 2024 E-Rate News Brief](#).

## [Lifeline](#) and [ACP](#)

### **ACP Wind-Down**

On January 11, 2024, the FCC released an [Order](#) announcing the wind-down requirements of the Affordable Connectivity Program, due to a lack of additional funding from Congress. The end of the program is currently projected for April 2024. This date is an estimate and may change. Effective February 8, 2024, the ACP is no longer accepting new enrollments. As of the date of the enrollment freeze, there are over 23 million households enrolled and receiving the ACP monthly benefit. As of January 25, the first round of provider notices regarding the ACP wind-down have been sent to ACP households. For additional information and updates, please visit

[AffordableConnectivity.gov](#).

### **Recertification Notice**

Recertification is an annual requirement for all Lifeline subscribers. USAC conducts recertification to ensure that active Lifeline subscribers, including those who also participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), are still eligible for the Lifeline benefit.

On February 28, 2024, USAC initiated automated eligibility database checks to verify the eligibility of Lifeline subscribers due for recertification in 2024.

- Subscribers who pass the automated check will not need to take any action for their 2024 recertification.
- Subscribers who fail the automated check will be required to recertify their continued eligibility through a manual process. USAC will conduct outreach to those subscribers.

Subscribers who participate in both Lifeline and the ACP and pass the USAC-conducted Lifeline recertification process will not need to undergo a separate ACP recertification process. Given that funding for the ACP is projected to run through April 2024 (this date is an estimate and may change), the status for the 2024 ACP recertification process is still being determined. USAC will provide more information regarding ACP recertification efforts at a later date.

To learn more about the recertification process, visit the [Recertification](#) webpage, view the [Recertification 101](#) training.

### **Resources**

Find upcoming trainings and other resources on the [Lifeline Learn](#) page and the [ACP Learn](#) page on USAC's website.

## [Rural Health Care](#)

### **FY2024 Filing Window Closes on April 1, 2024**

The Rural Health Care (RHC) program's filing window for FY2024 will close on April 1, 2024. This means all funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on April 1, 2024, to be considered for funding. We highly encourage you to submit your funding request as early as possible. Learn more about [filing windows](#).

The following resources have been posted to the USAC website to assist applicants that are submitting the FCC Form 462 for the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) program through RHC Connect, the platform for the RHC program.

- [Welcome to RHC Connect](#)
- [FCC Form 462 User Guide](#)

### **Upcoming Office Hours and Trainings**

Please join the RHC Outreach team for the following webinars:

- HCF Office Hours – March 13, 2024, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).
- Telecommunications (Telecom) Office Hours – March 20, 2024, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).
- Service Providers Training – March 27, 2024, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).

## [High Cost](#)

### USAC Updates CAF Map

USAC has released an updated version of the Connect America Fund Broadband Map (CAF Map), an interactive online map that shows the impact of the [Connect America Fund](#) (CAF) on broadband expansion to close the digital divide in rural America. The CAF provides funding to telecommunications carriers to bring advanced communications networks and reliable, affordable high-speed internet access to rural communities that might otherwise go unserved by the private sector.

First launched in 2018, the CAF Map displays the geographic locations where carriers that receive CAF support have built out mass-market, high-speed fixed internet service. The latest version of the map contains updated information to reflect all fixed broadband deployment reported to USAC as of Sept. 30, 2023.

The Tribal boundaries on the CAF Map reflect the definition of Tribal lands that the FCC adopted for the purpose of awarding [ACAM II](#) support. This means that the Tribal boundaries depicted include any federally recognized Indian Tribe's reservation, pueblo or colony, including former reservations in Oklahoma, Alaska Native regions established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlements Act (85 Stat. 688), Indian Allotments and Hawaiian Home Lands.

To learn more about updates to the CAF Map, please see the High Cost [CAF Map announcement](#).

## Key Dates and Trainings

### E-Rate

- **Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 11:59:59 p.m. ET** – The FY2024 FCC Form 471 application filing window will close.
- To view E-Rate's prior training webinars, please visit the [E-Rate Webinar](#) page or [E-Rate Tribal Trainings](#) page.

### Lifeline/ACP

- **Tuesday, March 12, 2024, at 4 p.m. ET** – Lifeline and USAC's Tribal Liaison will host the monthly Tribal Teleconference, covering the National Verifier system – [Register](#).
- **Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 3 p.m. ET** – Lifeline will host its March 2024 Monthly Webinar – [Register](#).

### RHC

- **Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 2 p.m. ET** – RHC will host an Office Hours session for the HCF Program – [Register](#).
- **Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at 2 p.m. ET** – RHC will host an Office Hours session for the Telecom Program – [Register](#).
- **Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 2 p.m. ET** – Service Providers Training – [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 to answer your program-specific questions.

### Questions or Suggestions?

Contact the USAC Tribal Liaison at [TribalLiaison@usac.org](mailto:TribalLiaison@usac.org).

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