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# July 2025 Tribal Nation Newsletter

July 31, 2025 | [Universal Service Administrative Company \(USAC\)](#)



## Tribal Nation News

Join USAC for the August 2025 Tribal Teleconference, in collaboration with the Rural Health Care (RHC) Program, to learn about RHC program updates, including program rules and orders, guidance about compliance and submitting FCC forms, and more. Tribal applicants, service providers, and interested stakeholders are invited to learn more about the RHC programs and ask questions or seek clarification on program rules during these webinars. Please join us on **Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at 4 p.m. ET** – [Register](#).

## Notes from USAC's Tribal Liaison

Calling all service providers!

We are excited to share that USAC's E-Rate and RHC programs have updated the [E-Rate Service Provider Process](#) and [RHC Service Provider Process](#) webpages to better support your participation in the Universal Service Fund (USF) programs.

The two programs collaborated to:

- Ensure titles and descriptions of the service provider enrollment process accurately reflect the key activities within each process step.
- Simplify page content where process requirements are similar. For example, obtaining a 498 ID/Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) is the same process for both programs.
- Incorporate links to additional information and expandable menus to reduce page scroll.

In addition, we've created two new resources for E-Rate:

- [E-Rate Service Provider Activities for Funding Year \(FY\) 2025](#)

- [Select an Invoicing Method in E-Rate](#)

And updated this tip sheet for new Tribal service providers:

- [Registering for a Service Provider Identification Number \(SPIN\) Checklist for New Tribal Service Providers](#)

By clarifying and aligning the steps that service providers must take to participate in the E-Rate and RHC programs, these content and resource updates aim to simplify participation in either or both programs – especially for small and rural service providers who are new to USAC. We hope you will take a look and find the updates helpful!

## [Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program \(T-LEAP\)](#)

If you are a Tribal library or a Tribal college and university (TCU) library, you can receive 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](#)

### **Certify Your FCC Form 486**

As a reminder, Funding Year (FY) 2025 applicants who have received a funding commitment from USAC and whose services have started can certify an [FCC Form 486](#) (Receipt of Service Confirmation and Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Certification Form) to inform USAC that services have started and to certify compliance with CIPA. Subsequently, invoicing can begin.

### **Prepare For the Upcoming Competitive Bidding and FCC Form 470 Process**

The FY2026 [FCC Form 470](#) (Description of Services Requested and Certification Form), which starts the competitive bidding process, became available July 1 in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC). FY2026 runs from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027.

Resources where you can find more information about compliance with the E-Rate program's [Competitive Bidding](#) process for applicants include:

- [Open & Fair Process webpage](#)
- [28-Day Waiting Period webpage](#)
- [How to Construct an Evaluation webpage](#)
- [Competitive Bidding Infographic](#)
- [Competitive Bidding Frequently Asked Questions](#)

If you are a service provider, feel free to review the:

- [Respond to Applicant Bid Requests webpage](#)
- [Lowest Corresponding Price webpage](#)
- [Document Retention webpage](#)
- [Competitive Bidding Infographic](#)
- [FCC Form 470 Download Tool](#)

## FCC Form 470 Reminders

The [FCC Form 470](#) is the form used by applicants to request bids for eligible services and equipment and to initiate the required competitive bidding process for the E-Rate program. Below are a few reminders about the FCC Form 470.

### File the FCC Form 470 in EPC

To start an FCC Form 470, you must have a [One Portal](#) username and password to access EPC. Your EPC account administrator can set up an EPC user account, and our system will then create a One Portal account for you. After your accounts are set up, you can log in to One Portal, choose EPC from your dashboard, and click the FCC Form 470 link at the top of your EPC landing page to start an FCC Form 470.

### Establish Your Organization's Profile

Your organization's profile must be established in EPC before you can file a program form, including an FCC Form 470. If you are new to the E-Rate program and looking to establish your entity, go to the [School and Library Eligibility page](#) and the [E-Rate Tips for New Tribal Applicants infographic](#) to learn how to set up your entity in EPC. Your billed entity information (BEN), including address, contact information, and attributes for the schools in a school district or libraries in a library system, is pulled into program forms from your organization's profile in EPC.

You do not need to update your student count (schools) or square footage (libraries) before filing the FCC Form 470. However, the system will count the number of recipients of service based on your current organization profile in EPC. If you cannot update your organization's profile information in EPC to reflect added or removed individual schools, library branches, or consortium members, you can provide updated information in the narrative fields in your FCC Form 470 and in the document(s) you attach to your form (see below).

### Upload Request for Proposal (RFP) Documents

If you are issuing any RFP and/or RFP documents, you are required to upload them to your FCC Form 470. RFP and RFP documents refer to any bidding document (such as an invitation for bid or request for quote) that describes your project and requested services and/or equipment in more detailed way than what is provided on the FCC Form 470.

The RFP (along with all subsequent addenda) must be made publicly available through USAC's website by uploading the RFP or RFP documents to your FCC Form 470 in EPC.

In addition, if you issue RFP documents **after** you certify an FCC Form 470, you must upload them to that certified FCC Form 470.

### Certify FCC Form 470 in EPC

If the user who creates the form does not have the necessary rights (permissions) to certify forms, EPC will create a task for users within the organization who do.

- Users with partial rights to the FCC Form 470 can complete the form but cannot certify the form.
- Users with full rights to the FCC Form 470 can complete, edit, and certify the form in EPC.

The FCC Form 470 is posted to [Tools](#) on the USAC website after it has been certified in EPC.

### View Your Receipt Notification

Your FCC Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter (RNL) that confirms your certification will appear in the "News" tab in your EPC account shortly after you certify your form. You can submit requests to correct certain errors through EPC by clicking "Related Actions" at the top of the form.

You can also access your RNL by navigating to your FCC Form 470 in EPC and clicking the "News" option

from the menu near the top of the page (not the blue News tab). By doing so, you will only see items that apply to this form.

### **View Filed FCC Forms 470**

EPC has a search and download function that will allow service providers with accounts in EPC to search for certified FCC Forms 470. On the service provider landing page, click the "Search FCC Form 470" link. You can download the form data from the search results as a set of CSV (comma separated value) files.

Service providers can also view a PDF version of a single form along with all of its attached RFP documents and detailed information for multiple forms in the [E-Rate FCC Form 470 Download Tool](#) on the E-Rate [Tools](#) page on the USAC website.

## **[Rural Health Care \(RHC\)](#)**

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### **FY2024 Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Annual Report Due September 30, 2025**

Per FCC Order 19-78, to supplement the information collected from forms filed by the healthcare provider (HCP), the FCC requires HCF participants who received funding in Funding Year (FY) 2024 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) to submit information to USAC about the telehealth applications used during the funding year.

#### **Who is Required to Submit the Annual Report?**

All HCF Program participants, both individual and consortia, must submit an annual report for each funding year in which they received HCF Program support and for the life of a supported facility or service for which the program participant received large upfront payments.

Beginning in FY2024, annual reports will be submitted in RHC Connect. Please use the [RHC Connect Annual Report User Guide](#) to assist you with your submission. Please visit the [Submit Annual Report page](#) for additional information.

Note: Failure to submit the required annual report(s) by the deadline may result in the denial of RHC program funding.

## **[Lifeline](#)**

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### **FCC Announces Updated Minimum Service Standards and Voice-Only Phase Out Extension**

The Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) recently made a pair of announcements related to minimum service standards and voice support.

On July 1, 2025, the Bureau released an [Order](#) pausing the phase-out of Lifeline support for voice-only service. The basic Lifeline support of \$5.25 remains available to eligible consumers receiving voice-only service through December 1, 2026.

The Bureau also paused an increase of Lifeline minimum service standard for mobile broadband data capacity for an additional year. The minimum service standard for mobile broadband data capacity remains at 4.5 GB per month through December 1, 2026.

On July 14, 2025, the Bureau released a [Public Notice](#) announcing the Lifeline minimum service standard for fixed broadband data usage will be 1280 GB per month starting on December 1, 2026. Service providers

providing Lifeline-supported fixed broadband service should notify their Lifeline subscribers of this change.

The Bureau also announced that the minimum service standard for mobile voice service will remain at 1000 minutes per month. These updates reflect the Bureau's commitment to ensure qualifying consumers have continued access to robust and affordable phone and/or internet service.

## Key Dates and Trainings

### E-Rate

#### 2025 In-Person E-Rate Trainings:

- September 9, 2025, Denver, Colorado – [Register >](#)
- September 16, 2025, Washington DC – [Register >](#)
  - There is also a livestream option for this event.

#### RHC | FY2026 HCF Program Request for Services Webinar

Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

#### RHC | FY2026 Telecom Program Request for Services Webinar

Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

#### RHC | Service Provider Training (Q3)

Wednesday, August 27, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

#### Lifeline | August Monthly Webinar

Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

#### Lifeline | September Monthly Webinar

Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

#### Tribal Teleconferences:

- Tribal & RHC – Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at 4 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)
- Tribal & Lifeline Teleconference – Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 4 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](mailto:TribalLiaison@usac.org).

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