

July 2026 Tribal Nation Newsletter

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



Tribal Nation News

Notes from USAC's Tribal Liaison

Deadline Approaching: Update FCC Form 498 with SAM.gov Registration and UEI

Beginning August 10, USAC will start using the banking information in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) to remit USF program disbursements. All service providers and E-Rate BEAR filers must have an active SAM.gov registration including a bank account and must have added their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) to their FCC Form 498 in E-File or the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) to receive disbursements.

Service providers and E-Rate BEAR Filers who have not completed the SAM.gov registration process and added their UEI to E-File can submit invoices, but their payments will be held until these steps are completed.

Sign-up for the Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program (T-LEAP)

What is T-LEAP?

T-LEAP offers direct support to Tribal libraries and Tribal college and university (TCU) libraries in navigating the E-Rate application process, including one-on-one assistance in preparing applications, applying to the program, and receiving E-Rate support. Interested Tribal libraries can [sign up here](#) year-round.

To learn more, please visit the [T-LEAP](#) page or contact the [USAC Tribal Liaison](#).

[E-Rate](#)

Prepare for the Upcoming Competitive Bidding and FCC Form 470 Process

The Funding Year (FY) 2027 FCC Form 470, which must be submitted and completed to start the competitive bidding process, became available July 1 in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC). Applicants with long procurement cycles or other reasons for starting their FY2027 competitive bidding processes early may complete and certify this form in EPC. The FY2027 FCC Form 470 remains unchanged from last year.

Please reference the following resources where you can find more information about how to comply with the E-Rate program's [Competitive Bidding](#) rules:

Applicants:

- How to keep the bidding process [open & fair](#)
- The [28-day waiting period](#) before signing a contract
- [Evaluating bids and selecting a service provider](#)
- Competitive Bidding [Infographic](#)
- [Competitive Bidding Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Service Providers:

- How to [respond to bids](#)
- Requirements for [Lowest Corresponding Price](#) (LCP)
- Competitive Bidding [Document Retention](#) (List of Documents to Retain)
- Competitive Bidding [Infographic](#)
- Searching for FCC Form 470s using the [FCC Form 470 Download Tool](#).
- The March 31, 2026, [Service Provider Webinar](#) provides service providers with information on how to find applicant service requests and how to bid on services. View [webinar slides](#).

For more information and reminders about the FCC Form 470, please review the [July 2026 E-Rate News Brief](#).

E-Rate Outreach and Training

Upcoming Webinars

E-Rate FCC Form 470 and Competitive Bidding – August 6, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).

This webinar provides E-Rate participants with information on how to file the FCC Form 470 and the E-Rate competitive bidding process. The webinar will cover topics such as planning your project, ensuring an open and fair process, and common errors. It is for beginner-level applicants and service providers, but those of all levels of E-Rate experience are welcome to join.

E-Rate Program Overview – September 10, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).

This webinar will provide an overview of the E-Rate application process and explain basic program concepts. We will also highlight recent program changes, including the recent FCC Form 470 updates and managing one's Category Two budget. This webinar is intended for program participants of all experience levels and will include a question-and-answer session.

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

To learn more information about program changes, selective review, registering your entity on SAM.gov, and E-Rate tips, please review the [July 2026 E-Rate News Brief](#).

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

[Lifeline](#)

Improved Representative ID Retrieval in RAD

On July 14, 2026, USAC released an update to the Representative Accountability Database (RAD) granting representatives additional methods to retrieve their Representative ID — either via email or via a personally identifiable information (PII) match workflow.

Enhanced Email Workflow

Representatives who choose to verify their identity using their email address will have the option to retrieve their Representative ID by accessing their email or answering security questions. If security questions are the selected choice, once successfully answered, the representative will immediately see their Representative ID displayed on the page.

PII Match Workflow

If a representative does not remember the email address they used to register for their Representative ID, RAD now includes a personal information match workflow to locate a representative’s ID using their first and last name, date of birth, address, and the last four digits of their Social Security Number. International representatives should leave the Social Security Number field blank. If the personal information entered matches the representative’s record, they will immediately see their Representative ID on the page.

California Subscribers Continued Eligibility Begins Early August

Under direction of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and pursuant to the [FCC OIG Advisory Regarding Deceased and Duplicate Lifeline Subscribers](#), USAC will be initiating a continued eligibility process for federal subscribers who were previously determined eligible by the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC). The continued eligibility process is anticipated to start in early August, and subscribers must complete the process within 60 days. This continued eligibility process fulfills the 2026 recertification process for subscribers in California.

USAC will issue a bulletin once the California continued eligibility process starts and will host a provider-facing California Continued Eligibility Office Hour session on **Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 3 p.m. ET** – [Register](#). In the meantime, service providers are encouraged to thoroughly review our [June 16, 2026](#) bulletin.

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

On July 1, 2026, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) released an [Order](#) extending the phase-out of Lifeline support for voice-only service. The \$5.25 per month Lifeline support amount for eligible consumers receiving qualifying voice service will remain available until December 1, 2027.

The Bureau also paused the increase of Lifeline minimum service standard for mobile and fixed broadband data capacity for an additional year, retaining the 4.5 GB and 1280 per month capacity standard for mobile and fixed broadband respectively until December 1, 2027.

On July 29, 2026, the Bureau released a [Public Notice](#) announcing the fixed broadband usage allowance will continue to be 1280 GB per month. These standards will continue until December 1, 2027.

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.

Rural Health Care (RHC)

My Portal is Unavailable to External Users

Please be advised that as of July 31, 2026, My Portal is no longer available to external users. User data has been migrated to RHC Connect, the RHC online application system. Prior to that date, users were advised that all documents and information needed from My Portal should be saved to their device. For information for the last 10 funding years, please continue to use [Open Data](#) as a resource.

If you need to request documents from My Portal, please reach out to the [RHC Customer Service Center](#).

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 HCF participants who received funding in FY2025 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) 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.

For FY2025, annual reports should 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](#) webpage for additional information.

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

Upcoming Office Hours and Trainings

Please join the Rural Health Care (RHC) outreach team for the following webinars:

- FY2027 HCF Program Request for Service webinar – **August 5, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET** – [Register](#).
- FY2027 Telecom Program Request for Service webinar – **August 26, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET** – [Register](#).

High Cost

FCC Form 481 and Broadband Deployment Data Available to Tribal Officials

Tribal officials can now request access to the most recent [FCC Form 481](#) filings submitted by telecommunications carriers that serve Native American communities with financing from the High Cost program by completing the [Tribal Access Request Form](#) and emailing it to the USAC High Cost Division at Form481@usac.org. Tribal officials can also view deployment data for broadband networks supported by the Connect America Fund (CAF) in Indian Country through the [Connect America Fund Broadband Map](#) (CAF Map) and the [Connect America Fund State Map](#) (CAF State Map).

To learn more about how to access FCC Form 481 data and broadband deployment data, please review the [July 16 High Cost Announcement](#).

Key Dates and Trainings

RHC | FY2027 HCF Program Request for Service Webinar

Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

RHC | FY2027 Telecom Program Request for Service Webinar

Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

Lifeline | How to Apply for the Survivor Benefit Webinar

Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 3 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

Lifeline | California Continued Eligibility Office Hour

Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 3 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

E-Rate | FCC Form 470 and Competitive

Thursday, August 6, 2026, at 2 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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