View this email as a web page.

**Universal Service**
Administrative Co.

# March 2025 Tribal Nation Newsletter

March 31, 2025 | University Service Administrative Company (USAC)

## Tribal Nation News

USAC's April Tribal Teleconference will provide an overview of the Universal Service Fund programs, including Lifeline, E-Rate, High Cost, and Rural Health Care, with time for Q&A. Please join us on **Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 4 p.m. ET** – Register.

**USAC on the Road**
We are excited to announce that USAC is heading out on the road April 1 and 2 for the National Tribal Telecommunications Association's (NTTA) Spring Tribal Broadband Summit in Chandler, Arizona.

We look forward to engaging with industry leaders as they reveal best practices, new ideas, and real-world experiences of bringing high-speed internet to Tribal communities. We hope to see you there!

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

Tribal libraries and Tribal college and university (TCU) libraries that serve as public libraries in their communities can now 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](#)

**Funding Year (FY) 2025 Application Filing Window** . The FY 2025 E-Rate application filing window closed on Wednesday, March 26. If you have not yet certified and submitted your application, you should do so as soon as possible and then submit a waiver request with the FCC. If you need to request a waiver of the window deadline (i.e., after March 26), be sure to certify and submit your FCC Form 471 in EPC before you file your waiver request with the FCC. You will receive an out-of-window status notification after you certify your form. If the waiver request is granted, the FCC Form 471 will be treated as timely filed during the filing window. See the [E-Rate Appeals Waiver Guide](#) to learn more.

## E-Rate Program Document Retention Requirements

We would like to remind E-Rate participants of the requirement to retain program documentation. Pursuant to program rules, all program participants are required to retain receipt and delivery records relating to pre-bidding, bidding, contracts, application process, invoices, provision of services, and any other documentation demonstrating compliance with program rules for a **period of at least 10 years** after the last day of the applicable funding year or the service delivery deadline for the funding request, whichever is later.

**Applicants**
Documents to retain as part of the [competitive bidding process](#) include but are not limited to:

- The [FCC Form 470](#).
- The [request for proposals (RFP)](#), if one is issued, and any RFP documents.
- Questions from potential bidders and your answers.
- Copies of winning and losing bids (including any disqualified bids). Note that service providers are not required to retain losing bids.
- The final [bid evaluation matrix](#) (or matrices, if you have multiple reviewers) and any [supporting documentation](#) of your bid evaluation.
- If there is a restriction that prevents services and costs from being made public, a copy of the precise cite to the law, statute, local rule, or court order identifying the restriction.
- The [contract](#), if one is signed.

**Service Providers**
In addition to invoicing forms and post-commitment change requests, service providers should also retain copies of policies and procedures, including the following:

- Policies and procedures for ensuring beneficiaries are charged the [lowest corresponding price](#) (Lowest Corresponding Price (LCP) compliance).
- Policies and procedures for ensuring employee compliance with the FCC [gift rules](#).
- Policies and procedures for ensuring compliance with the FCC document retention rules.
- Conflict of interest policy ensuring independence between service provider employees and program beneficiaries.
- Policies and procedures for ensuring beneficiaries are accurately billed and USAC is accurately invoiced for E-Rate eligible services.

Go to the [E-Rate Document Retention](#) page and the [E-Rate Program List of Documents to Retain for Audits and to Show Compliance with Program Rules](#) page to learn more.

## Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program

On January 17, 2025, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a [Public Notice](Public Notice) announcing the participants selected for the Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program (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](Cybersecurity Pilot Program webpages).

## Lifeline

### Lifeline Benefit: Key Differences Between Standard and Survivor Support

Survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking and related crimes can qualify for Lifeline support. Qualifying survivors can receive a discount of up to $9.25 on voice, internet, or bundled services for up to six months. Survivors can participate in the Lifeline program if they attempt a line separation request from their mobile phone provider and can confirm they are experiencing financial hardship.

**The survivor benefit is unique from the standard Lifeline benefit in a few ways:**



**Access Emergency Lifeline Benefits as a Survivor**

Emergency Lifeline benefits are available to survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and related crimes.

**A Bigger Voice-Only Benefit**
Survivors may receive up to $9.25 on voice-only service, up from the standard Lifeline benefit of $5.25.

**Enhanced Data Privacy**
Survivors' personally identifiable information is kept private throughout the application process.

**Expanded Contact Options**
Survivors may choose how to be contacted (email, phone, or mail) to better protect their security.

**Extended Eligibility Criteria**
Survivors may qualify based on their household income, their existing eligibility for Lifeline, or their participation in certain government assistance programs.

**Resources for Survivors:**
Service providers and consumer advocates are encouraged to actively inform and assist affected individuals in accessing this vital resource. USAC has several resources to help survivors, and their advocates understand and apply for the Lifeline Survivor Benefit, including:

- [Survivor Benefit Page](Survivor Benefit Page)
- [Survivor Benefit Flyer](Survivor Benefit Flyer)
- [Online Application Instructions](Online Application Instructions) (available in English and nine other languages)
- [How to Apply for Survivors](How to Apply for Survivors) (a step-by-step overview of the survivor benefit application process)

Service providers are also encouraged to review our [Safe Connections Act](#) page for further information.

## Disaster Assistance Waiver Applications Ending Soon

### Helene Waiver Enrollment Ending April 2, 2025

On October 2, 2024, the FCC adopted an [Order](#) that temporarily waived Lifeline eligibility requirements in section [47 CFR § 54.409(a)-(b)](#) to allow consumers participating in FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP), as a result of Hurricane Helene, Tropical Storm Helene, and Post-Tropical Cyclone Helene (collectively, the Helene Weather Events), to apply for and enroll in the Lifeline program. Enrollments will close on April 2, 2025.

### Milton Waiver Enrollment Ending April 10, 2025

On October 10, 2024, the FCC adopted an [Order](#) that temporarily waived Lifeline eligibility requirements in section [47 CFR § 54.409(a)-(b)](#) to allow consumers receiving FEMA's IHP support due to Hurricane Milton and its immediate aftermath (collectively, the Milton Weather Events), to apply for and enroll in the Lifeline program. Enrollments will close on April 10, 2025.

## Key Dates and Trainings

---

**E-Rate | Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) and the Selective Review Processes Webinar**
April 3, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

**RHC | FY2025 Healthcare Connect Fund Office Hours #4**
April 16, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

**RHC | FY2025 Telecom Office Hours #4**
April 23, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

**Lifeline | How to Apply for Lifeline**
April 9, 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](mailto:TribalLiaison@usac.org).

This email was sent to:            Please do not reply to this email.

[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)