November 2023 USAC Tribal Nation Newsletter

November 30, 2023

Monthly Tribal Teleconference

Universal Service Administrative Company’s (USAC) December Tribal Teleconference will be held in collaboration with the Lifeline team. USAC will provide an overview of the Lifeline program and there will be time for questions and answers. Please join the teleconference on Thursday, December 7, 2023, at 3 p.m. ET – Register.

Seeking Nomination for Tribal Government Representatives for the Native Nations Communication Task Force

On October 16, 2023, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) posted Public Notice DA-23-982 announcing their search for new Tribal government representatives for the Native Nations Communication Task Force (Task Force). New representatives will serve a three-year term, with an expected start date of January 1, 2024. Incumbent task force members who wish to recommit themselves to the Task Force must submit a letter stating their intent to continue to serve on the Task Force. All applications for nomination and letters of recommitment should be submitted by email to Native@fcc.gov. Nominations and letters of recommitment are due November 30, 2023.

E-Rate

EPC Tribal Updates

On July 21, 2023, the FCC released an Order (FCC 23-56) (Tribal Order) to further enhance Tribal applicants’ access to the E-Rate program through program simplifications and other changes aimed to encourage greater Tribal participation, including the creation of an E-Rate definition for “Tribal.”

- Definition of a Tribal Entity
  
  An entity is ‘Tribal’ for purposes of E-Rate funding if it is a school operated by or receiving funding from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), or if it is a school or library operated by any Tribe, Band, Nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska native village, regional corporation, or village corporation (as defined in, or established pursuant to, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.)) that is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

- Tribal Library
  
  Tribal Councils can designate a library as a Tribal library (for example, through a Tribal Resolution), and Tribal libraries should be able to demonstrate that they have three basic characteristics of a library: regular hours, staff, and materials (see FCC 22-8). A signed letter from a state library agency can be used to establish E-Rate eligibility for a library, but it cannot be used to establish Tribal status. Tribal government entity documentation, such as a charter, ordinance, or letter from the Tribal Council, can be used to establish Tribal status.

USAC has made updates in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) based on the FCC’s Tribal Order including eligibility and Category Two updates. You can view the Tribal Library Eligibility Changes in EPC video to learn more.

To review previous E-Rate program updates, please see the November 2023 E-Rate News Brief.

To learn more about the E-Rate program and how to apply for the upcoming Funding Year (FY) 2024, please contact...
Lifeline and ACP

Support Center: Operating Schedule Through Year-End
The Lifeline Support Center and the ACP Support Center will be closed on the following days: December 25, 2023 and January 1, 2024. Additionally, Lifeline and ACP applications requiring manual review will not be reviewed and approved on these days.

Lifeline Tribal Q4 2023 Training
On December 7, 2023, at 3 p.m. ET, join us for our quarterly Lifeline Tribal Training. The webinar will provide a step-by-step overview of how to apply for the Lifeline benefit via mail. Register here for the Q4 2023 quarterly Tribal Training.

Reminder: Lifeline Minimum Service Standards Effective December 1, 2023
On July 7, 2023, the Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB or the Bureau) paused the phase-out of Lifeline support for voice-only services for an additional year. As such, the basic Lifeline support of $5.25 remains available to eligible consumers who subscribe to voice-only service until at least December 1, 2024.

The Bureau also paused an increase of the Lifeline minimum service standard for mobile broadband data capacity for an additional year. As such, the minimum service standard for mobile broadband data capacity will remain at 4.5 GB per month until at least December 1, 2024.

On July 21, 2023, WCB announced an updated fixed broadband minimum service standard for Lifeline-support broadband service. Effective December 1, 2023, the fixed broadband usage will remain at 1,280 GB per month. The minimum service standard for mobile broadband speed remains at 3G, and the standard for fixed broadband speed remains at 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload.

Training and Resources
Find upcoming trainings and other resources on the Lifeline Learn page and the ACP Learn page on USAC’s website.

To make sure you are receiving the latest information, please sign up for USAC's newsletter, and if you would like to be an outreach partner for the ACP, sign up at fcc.gov/acp.

To learn more about ACP or Lifeline updates, please visit the ACP Bulletins page or the Lifeline Announcements page.

Key Dates and Trainings

E-Rate
- The FY2024 application filing window will open in January 2024. The FY2024 application filing window dates will be announced in December 2023.
- To view prior webinars, please visit the E-Rate webinar page or E-Rate Tribal Training page for additional information about changes made to the E-Rate program to encourage greater Tribal applicant participation.

Lifeline/ACP
- Thursday, December 7, 2023, Lifeline will host its Tribal Q4 2023 Training 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 to answer your program-specific questions.
Questions or Suggestions?
Contact the USAC Tribal Liaison at TribalLiaison@usac.org.

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