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Universal Service
Administrative Co.

November 2025 Tribal Nation Newsletter

December 1, 2025 | [Universal Service Administrative Company \(USAC\)](#)



Tribal Nation News

Join USAC for the December 2025 Tribal Teleconference, in collaboration with the Lifeline program, to learn about Lifeline program compliance, the audit process, and how service providers can prevent common audit findings. There will be time for Q&A. Please join us on **Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 4 p.m. ET** – [Register](#).

Notes from USAC's Tribal Liaison

Upcoming USAC Customer Service Center Closures

USAC and all Customer Service Centers will be closed on December 25, 2025, and January 1, 2026.

Important Upcoming E-Rate Trainings

Below are upcoming E-Rate webinars covering important and timely topics. E-Rate staff will be available to answer your questions.

Fall 2025 Training Series Webinars

- **The EPC Administrative Window** on **December 2, 2025**, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET. This webinar discusses the EPC Administrative Window – the period during which applicants can make updates to their EPC profile information to prepare for the upcoming FCC Form 471 application filing window. Other topics include how to update your EPC profiles and some Administrative Window best practices. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session – [Register](#).
- **Eligible Services 101** on **December 3, 2025**, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET. This webinar will review E-Rate eligible services. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session. There are no prerequisites for this webinar – [Register](#).

[E-Rate](#)

Competitive Bidding – Set Yourself Up for Success

The competitive bidding process, the foundation of the E-Rate program, ensures that schools and libraries can get telecommunications equipment and services at reasonable prices. The process must be “open and fair” and requires the applicant to select the most cost-effective provider based on its bid evaluation factors. The price of the eligible equipment and services must be given the most weight during the bid evaluation process.

The process starts when an applicant certifies and submits an [FCC Form 470](#) and USAC posts the form on its website. FCC Forms 470 can be found using the [E-Rate FCC Form 470 Download Tool](#), which service providers can use to find equipment and services to bid on. You can view and export FCC Form 470 data and download PDF versions of the FCC Form 470 and any Request for Proposal (RFP) attachments.

Your FCC Form 470 and any RFPs should provide sufficient information for potential bidders to provide a comprehensive bid (e.g., for managed internal broadband services, specify the exact equipment/services to be managed) and you should ensure that no potential bidders help you prepare and submit the form. Any assistance from a potential bidder with the FCC Form 470 and/or RFP is competitive bid violation that could result in denial or recovery of funds, potentially over a number of years, if a multi-year contract was at issue.

Your competitive bidding process must be [open and fair](#). “Fair” means that all bidders are treated the same and that no bidder has project information that others do not. “Open” means there are no secrets in the process and that all bidders know what is required of them. To ensure your process is open and fair, you must submit any FCC Form 470, RFP, and other information/updates in EPC for all potential bidders to see for at least 28 days.

You must wait at least 28 days from the posting date of your FCC Form 470/RFP before selecting a service provider. The day you **certify** the FCC Form 470 is day 1. For example, if the FCC Form 470 is certified on the 1st of the month, you may select a service provider on or after the 29th of the month. This is the allowable contract date (ACD) found on your FCC Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter (RNL) sent to you when you certified your form.

After waiting the [required 28 days](#), you then evaluate the bids received against your evaluation criteria, which must include the price of eligible services/equipment as the primary evaluation factor (highest weighted factor). Only the costs of eligible equipment/services should be evaluated in this criterion. Creating a [bid evaluation matrix](#) can help you consider all responsive bids and [select a service provider](#) that meets your needs.

Once you select a bidder and enter into a [contract](#), you can upload those contracts to EPC so that the information is available to reviewers when it comes time to submit your funding requests on the FCC Form 471 application during the annual funding year window. Go to the [Competitive Bidding Infographic](#) to learn more.

To learn more about the E-Rate program, please review the [November 2025 E-Rate News Brief](#).

[Lifeline](#)

FCC Form 555 Due February 2, 2026

The 2025 FCC Form 555, or Annual Lifeline Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Certification Form, is due on **Monday, February 2, 2026**. This form is used for annual recertification process and non-usage de-enrollment reporting for the Lifeline program. The form must be submitted electronically to USAC via USAC’s [One Portal](#), which will open on December 10, 2025. USAC will notify stakeholders when the 2025 FCC Form 555 becomes available.

In preparation for the opening of the submission window, service providers should:

- Register for the FCC Form 555 [December Lifeline webinar](#).
- Ensure they have One Portal login credentials. If providers need assistance with their One Portal account, they can email CustomerSupport@usac.org.

Support Center: Operating Schedule Through Year-End

The Lifeline Support Center will be closed on December 25, 2025 and January 1, 2026. Additionally, Lifeline applications requiring manual review will not be reviewed and approved on these days.

Key Dates and Trainings

- EPC Administrative Window – December 2, 2025, 2 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)
- Eligible Services 101 – December 3, 2025, 2 p.m. ET – [Register >](#)

Lifeline | Completing the FCC Form 555

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

Tribal Teleconference

Tribal and Lifeline Teleconference – December 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.

This email was sent to: bob.mcwilliams@usac.org. Please do not reply to this email.

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