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September 2026 Tribal Nation Newsletter

September 30, 2026 | [Universal Service Administrative Company \(USAC\)](#).



Tribal Nation News

Notes from USAC's Tribal Liaison

Join the Universal Service Admirative Company (USAC) and the High Cost team for the High Cost 101 October Tribal Teleconference. This session will provide a big-picture overview of the High Cost program—including an explanation of the modernized funds that make up the Connect America Fund (CAF) program—with time for Q&A.

Please join us on **Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 4 p.m. ET** – [Register](#).

September 8 Transition Date to SAM.gov

On September 8, 2026, USAC started using SAM.gov banking information to remit payment for all Universal Service Fund (USF) invoices. Service providers who have an active SAM.gov registration and have added their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) to the FCC Form 498 do not need to take any additional actions. All invoices paid after September 8 will be disbursed to the bank account associated with their SAM.gov registration.

- Payments Will Be Held for Service Providers Without an Active SAM.gov Registration and UEI
 - All service providers who invoice USAC and receive USF disbursements must have their current SAM.gov UEI on their FCC Form 498 and must have a valid bank account associated with their SAM.gov registration.
 - Service providers who have not registered with SAM.gov or added their UEI to the FCC Form 498 should do so promptly. Service providers without a UEI in their FCC Form 498 can submit invoices, but their payments will be held until these steps are completed.

- If a payment is held, USAC will send an email to the remittance contact for that USF program notifying them of the hold with the subject line "Action Required: Your Payment is on Hold."

For questions about a held payment, contact the USAC Customer Service Center at CustomerSupport@USAC.org.

- Maintaining SAM.gov Registrations
 - SAM.gov requires users to renew their registration annually. The renewal process is conducted through the SAM.gov website. Once users complete their renewal, SAM.gov will inform USAC; service providers do not need to take any action with their FCC Form 498.

Additional Information

For background information about USAC's requirement to use SAM.gov registration, and to learn more about USAC's transition to using SAM.gov payment data for USF invoices, visit USAC's [SAM.gov UEI Requirement](#) webpage.

For questions about SAM.gov registration or associated bank accounts, please visit the [SAM.gov website](#).

E-Rate

FY2025 Invoicing Deadline Reminders for Recurring Services

In most cases, October 28, 2026, is the deadline to file an invoice or to request an invoice deadline extension (IDE) if the request is made within 15 days of the original IDE for most Funding Year (FY) 2025 recurring services Funding Request Numbers (FRNs). This invoice filing deadline applies to both applicant and service provider invoices – the FCC Form 472 (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR Form)) and the FCC Form 474 (Service Provider Invoice (SPI Form) and (eSPI)), respectively.

How To Request an Invoice Filing Deadline Extension for FRNs From FY2016 and Forward

Both applicants and service providers can request an invoice filing deadline extension in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) by following the steps below. Remember that there is no penalty for requesting an invoice filing deadline extension and not using it.

Applicants:

- On your invoicing landing page, click the link to the billed entity record (the name in the Welcome! link near the top of the page or the first entry under the My Entities section).
- Select the Related Actions menu and choose Invoice Deadline Date Extension Request.

Service Providers:

- From the Records tab at the top of any EPC page, click the Service Providers option.
- Use the Search function to locate your service provider record.
- Select the Related Actions menu and choose Invoice Deadline Date Extension Request.

You can use the [E-Rate FRN Status Tool FY2016+](#) to find the invoicing filing deadline by searching for the FRN(s) and looking in the "Last Date to Invoice" column.

FY2026 FCC Form 486 Deadline Reminder

October 29, 2026, is the deadline to file an FY2026 FCC Form 486 if your FCDL is dated **on or before July 1, 2026**, and your **service start date is July 1, 2026**. If these conditions apply to you, please certify and

submit your [FCC Form 486](#) on or before this deadline.

If your FCC Form 486 is not received by the deadline, we will send an **FCC Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letter** to remind you that the FCC Form 486 is due. The service start date you reported on your FCC Form 471 is used to determine when the letter is sent, so if your service start date changed, your deadline may have changed as well.

The reminder letter is posted to your EPC **News** feed and is emailed to the contact person on the FCC Form 471. You have 15 days after the date of the reminder letter to submit and certify your FCC Form 486 without penalty.

Applicants whose services started after July 1, 2026, or whose FCDLs are dated after July 1, 2026 (including any that have not yet been issued), will have an FCC Form 486 deadline later than October 29, 2026. However, we encourage you to submit and certify your FCC Form 486 as soon as possible after services start for FY2026 if you can accurately make all the certifications on the form.

The [FRN Invoice Deadline Tool](#) provides the ability to search, view, and download invoice-related data including the FCC Form 486 status and deadline date. View the [training video](#) to learn more about this tool.

EPC Administrative Window Opens October 21, 2026

The EPC administrative window is the period during which applicants can make **updates to their profile information** including student counts, National School Lunch Program (NSLP) participation rates, library square footage, and the entities and individuals associated with your entity (including consulting firms) in EPC to prepare for the upcoming FY2027 FCC Form 471 application filing window. Applicants and service providers should also review EPC account permissions and make updates as needed (see article below).

The administrative window **will open Wednesday, October 21, 2026**, and will close shortly before the FY2027 application filing window opens in early 2027. After this time, applicant profiles will be locked, and you will not be able to make changes to your profile information.

FY2027 will be the second year of the FY2026-2030 Category Two (C2) budget cycle, so applicants should update their student counts or library square footage as needed. The information in your EPC profile will be used to calculate a forecasted C2 budget for the FY2026-2030 cycle.

Go to the [EPC Administrative Window](#) page for detailed information on updating entity profiles.

Webinars

E-Rate will host an Eligible Services 101 webinar on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET. The webinar will review E-Rate eligible services and discuss the Eligible Services List (ESL) with time for a Q & A. – [Register](#).

In-Person Conferences

USAC is coming to a conference near you in 2026.

- Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition AnchorNets (Virginia) from October 7-9, 2026. [Event link](#).
- New England Library Association Conference (Vermont) from October 25-27, 2026. [Event link](#).

Reminders

For more information about the upcoming FY2025 invoice deadline, FY2027 competitive bidding, and more, please review the [September 2026 E-Rate News Brief](#).

If you are a Tribal library or TCU library interested in participating in E-Rate, consider [joining T-LEAP](#) and review the [participant process](#).

[Rural Health Care](#)

FY2025 Invoice Filing Deadline is October 28!

The invoice filing deadline for most single-year funding year (FY) 2025 funding commitments is October 28, 2026. The invoice filing deadline is 120 days from the later of the service delivery deadline, the date of a revised funding commitment letter (FCL) approving a post-commitment request, or a successful appeal of a previously denied or reduced funding request. This invoice filing deadline applies to both RHC programs under 47 CFR 54.627(a).

Prior to the invoice filing deadline (October 28, 2026, for FY 2025), you may request a single 120-day extension of the invoice filing deadline for any reason. 47 CFR 54.627(b). This is automatically granted.

Please get your invoices filed or submit invoice filing deadline extensions in RHC Connect. For more information, visit the following Post-Commitment Actions webpages for [HCF](#) or [Telecom](#).

Deadline to Submit SPIN Changes is Approaching

SPIN changes must be submitted by the invoice filing deadline (October 28, 2026, for FY2025). 47 CFR 54.625(c). The invoice filing deadline for most single-year funding year (FY) 2025 funding commitments is October 28, 2026. Please submit SPIN Changes in RHC Connect. For more information, visit the following Post-Commitment Actions webpages for [HCF](#) or [Telecom](#).

[Lifeline](#)

Reminder: Maintain Accurate Designation Orders

Eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) are required to maintain accurate and up-to-date information with USAC, including details on current designation orders, service areas, compliance plans (if applicable), and company contact information. ETCs are also reminded to only enroll subscribers in their designated service areas as per their state commission or the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designation orders.

If any changes are made to a provider's business model, providers should inform the corresponding [state commission](#), [FCC](#), and USAC in a timely manner. To update USAC, email LifelineProgram@usac.org.

Review Latest Training: Common Audit Findings

On Wednesday, September 9, 2026, the Lifeline team hosted a training on [program compliance](#). Service providers are encouraged to review the recording to ensure understanding of service provider responsibilities, common audit findings and strategies for preventing them, and audit and compliance resources available to support ongoing program adherence.

Key Dates and Trainings

Tribal Teleconference with High Cost: High Cost 101

Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 4 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

RHC | Post-Commitment Change Requests (HCF)

Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

RHC | Post-Commitment Change Requests (Telecom)

Wednesday, October 21, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

RHC | Q4 Service Provider Training

Wednesday, November 4, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

Lifeline | How to Apply for Lifeline

Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at 3 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

E-Rate | Category Two Budgets

Thursday, October 1, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

E-Rate | EPC Administrative Window

Thursday, October 15, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

E-Rate | Eligible Services 101

Tuesday, November 3, 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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