October 2023 USAC Tribal Nation Newsletter

October 31, 2023

Universal Service Administrative Company’s (USAC) November Tribal Teleconference, “Rural Health Care (RHC) 101,” will provide live support for questions regarding the RHC program. Please join the teleconference on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 4 p.m. ET – Register.

Seeking Nomination for Tribal Board Member Position at USAC
On September 26, 2023, the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC’s) Wireline Competition Bureau posted Public Notice DA-23-903 announcing their search for a new Board member representing Tribal communities on the USAC Board of Directors. The new Board member will serve a three-year term. Nominations are due November 20, 2023.

E-Rate

Apply for the E-Rate Tribal Libraries Pilot Program!
The Tribal Libraries Pilot Program provides Tribal libraries with one-on-one assistance in applying for and receiving E-Rate support. This includes sharing information about program rules and requirements, providing training on how to use the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC), and walking through the competitive bidding and application processes. To learn more about the program, including eligibility, expectations, and application steps, please review the Tribal Libraries Pilot Program page.

You can complete the survey application for the Pilot Program at https://tinyurl.com/TribalLibraryPilot.

New E-Rate Tribal Applicant Resources
New resources are available for E-Rate applicants, including the “E-Rate Program At-A-Glance” document, a checklist for new Tribal service providers registering for a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN), and an instructional video on how to designate your entity’s Tribal status in EPC.

Fall 2023 Training Reminder
USAC is offering a series of one-hour online training sessions for E-Rate program participants, including Tribal applicants. You can register to attend the sessions using the event registration links below; all sessions will also be recorded for those unable to attend live. Eligible Services training will be scheduled once the FY2024 Eligible Services List is released.

Below is the full list of upcoming sessions that are available under the “Upcoming Trainings” section of the E-Rate Webinars page. Webinar slides and recordings will also be published on the Webinars page.

- November 7, 2023 E-Rate Post-Commitment Process: USAC will discuss the E-Rate Post-Commitment Process and other post-commitment activities. Topics include starting services, the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), service substitutions, appeals, and more. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session.

- November 9, 2023 Invoicing: This webinar is designed to help E-Rate program participants (applicants and service providers) understand the invoicing process. We will discuss the FCC Form 472 (BEAR Form) and the FCC Form 474 (SPI Form), invoice deadlines, invoicing reviews, and more. This session will not cover the new invoicing functionality in EPC.
To watch a webinar recording, please visit the Previous Trainings section of the Webinars page, which has recordings from this fall’s earlier trainings on the EPC Administrative Window, Category Two Budgets, Eligible Services 101, Pre-Commitment Process, and E-Rate Program Overview.

To review other E-Rate program updates, please see the October 2023 E-Rate News Brief.

**Lifeline** and **ACP**

**Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Tribal Applicant Tips**

Below are a few tips to consider when applying for the ACP:

- **Identity verification** – Applicants can provide the last four digits of their Social Security number (SSN) or Tribal ID number when applying for the ACP. Consumers have the option of providing an official document (like a license, passport, etc.) to prove their eligibility in lieu of providing the last four digits of their SSN or Tribal ID.
  - If an applicant has an SSN, we strongly recommend that they provide it. Doing so may reduce the need for further identity verification later in the application process.
  - Using a Tribal ID number to verify identity will have no bearing on whether an applicant qualifies for the enhanced Tribal benefit.

- **Home address** – The home address entered during the application process will be used to confirm whether the applicant lives on qualifying Tribal lands. USAC uses an automated connection with the USPS to verify addresses. If an applicant’s address cannot be confirmed, please locate the address by using the mapping tool in the online application or submit verifying documentation to the ACP Support Center at PO Box 9100, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18773.
  - The mapping tool allows users to drop a pin on their home address or enter latitude and longitude coordinates. We know that addresses located in rural or Tribal areas may not always be recognized by the USPS, so it’s important that applicants identify their home address correctly on the map. USAC uses the coordinates obtained from the pin drop to check whether the address resides within qualifying Tribal lands.

- **Proof of participation in a qualifying Tribal program** – Consumers who live on Tribal lands can qualify for Lifeline or the ACP through participation in federal aid programs (such as SNAP, Medicaid, or SSDI), through their income, or through Tribal-specific aid programs (such as TANF or FDPIR). Consumers who participate in a qualifying Tribal program but **do not live** on qualifying Tribal lands must qualify for the standard benefit another way.
  - For example: If a consumer receives Tribally administered TANF but does not live on qualifying Tribal lands, they must qualify via their income or another.

- **How to check if an applicant qualifies for the enhanced Tribal benefit** – Once the consumer’s application is approved, there’s a “Do you live on Tribal lands?” section on the online application approval screen. Click on the “Confirm Tribal Qualification” button to confirm whether the applicant qualifies for the enhanced Tribal benefit.
  - Please note: Tribal lands residency is assessed using the geo-coordinates associated with the applicant’s home address or the coordinates obtained from dropping a pin in USAC’s mapping tool if the applicant’s address cannot be confirmed automatically.

As a reminder, if you need additional support with the ACP or Lifeline, please reach out to the program inboxes ACProgram@usac.org or LifelineProgram@usac.org and CC TribalLiaison@usac.org. Our customer service team is here to help.

**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 updates, please visit the ACP Bulletins page and review the September 2023 ACP Newsletter.

**RHC**

FY2024 Filing Window Opens December 1, 2023
The funding year (FY) 2024 filing window will be open from December 1, 2023, to April 1, 2024. This means that you can submit your funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) as early as December 1, 2023, and must submit them no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on April 1, 2024. We highly encourage you to submit your funding requests as early as possible in the filing window. Other forms for FY2024 (FCC Forms 460, 461, or 465) are accepted prior to December 1. Learn more about filing windows.

**Key Dates and Trainings**

**E-Rate**
- **Tuesday, November 7, 2023** – USAC will host a session on the E-Rate Post-Commitment Process at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).
- **Thursday, November 9, 2023** – USAC will host a session on E-Rate Invoicing at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).
- To view prior webinars, please visit the E-Rate [webinar page](#) or the [E-Rate Tribal-specific trainings](#).

**RHC**
- **Wednesday, November 15, 2023**, RHC will host a webinar on Healthcare Connect Fund Funding Requests at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).

**Lifeline/ACP**
- **Wednesday, November 8, 2023**, Lifeline will host its November 2023 Monthly Webinar 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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