



## E-Rate News Brief

February 20, 2025

### Funding Year (FY) 2025 FCC Form 471 Filing Window Countdown

The Funding Year (FY) 2025 FCC Form 471 application filing window is now open. The application filing **window closes on Wednesday, March 26, 2025** at 11:59:59 p.m. E.T. **Submit your application today!**

<b>Days to window close</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>FY2025 FCC Forms 470 filed</b>	<b>19,986</b>
<b>FY2025 FCC Forms 471 filed</b>	<b>9,155</b>

FCC Forms 470 and 471 counts as of yesterday, 9:00 p.m. EST

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## E-RATE TIPS:

- **Wednesday, February 26, 2025**, is the **last date to submit and certify an FCC Form 470 and still wait the required minimum 28-day period before submitting and certifying your FY2025 FCC Form 471 by March 26, 2025**, the last date of the FY2025 application filing window. Go to the [competitive bidding infographic](#) to learn about the steps in the competitive bidding process. View the [How to File an FCC Form 470](#) learning module or the [How to File the FCC Form 471](#) learning module, which guides users through all aspects of preparing, submitting, and certifying your forms.

- **Unresponsive Bids, "SPAM" Bids and "Robobids."** All bids received should be retained during the competitive bidding process. Disqualification factors can be applied to bids received that do not meet minimum bid requirements, do not include site- or project-specific details, and/or are not responsive to the applicant's requests. Applicants may include language in their FCC Form 470 narrative or request for proposal (RFP), such as, "SPAM and/or robotic responses will not be considered valid bid responses and will be disqualified from consideration." By doing this, applicants can disqualify bids based on this factor and not be required to evaluate the disqualified bids. The decision to disqualify any non-responsive bids should also be memorialized and retained to demonstrate compliance with the E-Rate competitive bidding rules.

- **Application Assistance for Tribal Libraries.** Do you know a Tribal library that is not currently participating in E-Rate? Please consider sharing the [Find Your Library Discount Guide](#), which can help libraries and other entity types look up the benefits you may receive through the E-Rate program, and information about [getting started](#). Tribal libraries can also [sign up for the Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program](#) (T-LEAP) and receive one-to-one assistance on all phases of applying for and receiving E-Rate funding.

- **Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program.** The FCC announced the applicants selected to participate in the Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program (Pilot Program) in a January 16, 2025 [Public Notice](#). In total, more than 700 schools, libraries, and consortia were selected to receive up to \$200 million over a three-year period to purchase a wide variety of eligible cybersecurity services and equipment. The FCC noted that the Pilot Program funding application filing window for applicants selected for the pilot will run from March 18 – September 15, 2025. View the [full list of selected participants](#), which can also be found in the Public Notice, Appendices A and B. To learn more, visit USAC's [Cybersecurity Pilot Program webpages](#).

## Funding Year (FY) 2024 Commitments

**FY2024.** USAC released FY2024 Wave 43 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on February 13. As of February 19, FY2024 commitments total over \$2.57 billion.

On the date that FCDLs are issued, you can access your FCDL notification from the **Notifications** section of your landing page in EPC.

You can use the [E-Rate Search Commitments Tool](#) to look up prior-year commitment data.

## Extended CSC Hours for Final Days of the Application Filing Window

The E-Rate Customer Service Center (CSC) **will be open extended hours before the March 26, 2025 deadline** for the close of the FY2025 FCC Form 471 application filing window to help applicants with last-minute questions and any issues. Call CSC at (888) 203-8100 for assistance.

Below are CSC's extended hours beginning Saturday, March 22, through Wednesday, March 26 (all times are Eastern Time (E.T.)):

- Saturday, March 22 – 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sunday, March 23 – 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Monday, March 24 – 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- Tuesday, March 25 – 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 26 – 8 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.

## Upcoming February 25 Invoicing Deadline for FY2023 Recurring Services

**February 25, 2025 is the deadline** to submit invoices **for FY2023 recurring services** if the applicant or service provider requested and received a one-time extension of the earlier October 28, 2024 deadline. You will not be able to submit invoices in EPC after February 25, and you will need to request a waiver of the invoice filing deadline rule from the FCC. Parties requesting a waiver must demonstrate extraordinary circumstances to justify a waiver of the invoice filing deadline date.

### Requesting an invoice filing deadline extension

If your invoice deadline date (IDD) has not passed, and you have not already requested and received a 120-day extension, you can [request an extension of the invoicing deadline](#) if you need more time to complete invoicing for your funding request numbers (FRNs). If the extension request is received before your IDD and approved, you will receive an additional 120 days to complete your invoicing process. USAC cannot approve a second extension if you requested and received a 120-day extension before.

All invoices and invoice deadline extension requests must be submitted on or before your invoice filing deadline date. If you do not know your invoice filing deadline date, the [E-Rate FRN Invoice Deadline Tool](#) provides the ability to search, view, and download data related to FRN(s) and the applicable invoice filing deadline date(s).

## Reminders for Filing an FY2025 FCC Form 471

Below are reminders for some of the actions you should take before the FY2025 application filing window closes on **March 26, 2025**.

### Wait the required, minimum 28-day period before selecting your service provider(s), and before submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471.

You must wait the required, minimum 28-day period after your [FCC Form 470](#) is certified and posted before choosing a service provider, and signing a contract (if applicable) before submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471. **The earliest date** you can enter into a contract **is listed on your FCC Form 470 as the "Allowable Contract Date"**. Changes to the FCC Form 470 beyond certain [allowable changes](#) require applicants to restart the minimum 28-day waiting period from the date of the change before selecting a service provider, signing a contract, or submitting and certifying an FCC Form 471.

Additionally, if you make any substantial changes to your uploaded RFP (request for proposals) or RFP documents after you certified and submitted your FCC Form 470, you are required to wait a minimum 28-day period from the date you uploaded your updated RFP or RFP documents. The required, minimum 28-day waiting period is based on the date of your certified and posted FCC Form 470 or uploaded RFP, whichever was filed later, if they are not posted together on the same date.

- EPC will not allow you to create a contract record if the FCC Form 470 you try to cite for the contract was not posted for at least 28 days.
- Once the minimum 28-day waiting period has ended and a service provider is selected, the applicant must have a contract or other binding agreement prior to the submission of the FCC Form 471. Note that a verbal agreement is not considered a contract or legally [binding agreement](#) under E-Rate program rules.
- For services provided under tariff or on a month-to-month basis, EPC will not allow you to finish entering a funding request for those services if the cited FCC Form 470 was not posted for at least 28 days.

### Make sure that you have access rights in EPC to be able to work on an FCC Form 471.

Your Account Administrator must grant you user rights to complete and/or certify the FCC Form 471. Note that new users must first accept the terms and conditions for EPC by clicking the **Tasks** tab from the menu at the top of the landing page and choosing the appropriate task.

After your rights have been assigned, click the **FCC Form 471** link at the top of your organization's landing page to start your form. If you have access to the form but cannot enter information or take other actions, call CSC at (888) 203-8100 for assistance.

### **Start your FCC Form 471, even if you are not ready to provide all funding request details.**

After you start your form, you can see your progress through the form by referring to the progress bar at the top of each page. If you need to stop before you have finished, the system will create a task for you under the **Tasks** tab to allow you to resume your work at the point you left. Be sure to review the following as you work through your form:

- Your organization's information (e.g., name, address, telephone number, attributes).
- Your related entities' information (e.g., name, address, urban/rural status, attributes, student counts for schools, library square footage, and library main branch designation for libraries).
- Your organization's urban/rural designation and discount calculation.

Because entity profiles are locked, you will not be able to make any entity changes at this point. However, by making a note of any necessary updates, you will be ready to submit a **RAL Modification Request** (see article below) to inform us of those updates.

### **Create a contract record for each new contract or legally binding agreement.**

You must have a contract record in your profile for each contract or legally binding agreement you intend to use on your FY2025 FCC Form 471. You then cite to the contract record for the services that will be provided under that contract when you are creating a funding request on your form.

- If you created a contract record in an earlier year for a multi-year contract that covers your services for FY2025, cite to that contract record for this year.
- If you created a contract record in an earlier year for a contract with voluntary extensions, you do not need to create a new contract record if the extension will cover services for all of FY2025. First, work with your service provider to exercise the extension for your FY2025 services. Then, when you cite to that contract record for the funding request for these services, enter the last date of service for all of FY2025 (i.e., June 30, 2026) in the contract end date field for that request. You do not have to create a new contract record simply because you exercised an option to extend the contract.
- Learn How to Create a Contract Record:
  - [How to Create a Contract Record](#) video.
  - [How to Create a Contract Record for Commercially Available Broadband/Low-Cost High-Speed Internet Access](#) (which is exempt from competitive bidding) video.

You are encouraged – but not required – to upload a copy of your contract into your contract record in EPC. If you do not upload your contract, be sure to keep a copy handy in case USAC requests it during the review of your application.

**Do not wait until the end of the application filing window to contact us with questions or issues.** You can open a customer service case in EPC or call CSC at (888) 203-8100 as soon as possible if you need assistance. If you choose to open a customer service case, you will also be able to upload one or more documents that provide additional information we need to process your request.

### **Interim SPIN Will Be Available March 12, 2025 for FY2025 FCC Form 471 Submissions**

Service providers who are new to the E-Rate program may have applied for, but not yet received, a [Service Provider Identification Number](#) (SPIN). Applicants, whose service providers have multiple SPINs or are undergoing a merger or acquisition, may not be sure which SPIN to include on an FCC Form 471 funding request.

In such cases, USAC enables an "interim SPIN" (143666666) shortly before the close of the FCC Form 471 application filing window. The **interim SPIN will be available starting March 12, 2025**. However, we encourage applicants to provide the correct SPIN for their FCC Form 471 funding requests, whenever possible, to speed USAC's review of their application.

Applicants can file an FCC Form 471 funding request and use this interim SPIN as a placeholder so they can timely file their form during the application filing window. They can then **update the SPIN through**

**a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) Modification Request** (see article below) or during the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review of their application.

## Use the RAL Modification Request to Update Certified FCC Form 471 Information

USAC issues an FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) to both the applicant and service provider(s) in EPC after an FCC Form 471 application is certified. The letter contains many of the details submitted on the FCC Form 471 and provides a means to correct any errors or mistakes. If you were not able to make all the appropriate updates to your profile in EPC before the close of the EPC FCC Form 471 administrative window, **you can provide updated profile information by filing a RAL Modification Request** after submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471 application(s), but before you receive funding commitment decision letter(s).

Applicants receive the RAL in their EPC **News** feed after certifying an FCC Form 471. The RAL modification function in EPC allows you to provide specific information in an organized format, which makes it easier for PIA reviewers to locate and understand the changes you want to make. Go to the [Ministerial & Clerical Errors](#) page to see the types of changes that are allowed and not allowed for the FCC Form 471. To learn how to submit modification requests for your FCC Form(s) 471, you can also view the [FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter Modification Guide](#).

## 2025 E-Rate Outreach and Training

### USAC Conference Events for 2025

- USAC is coming to an event near you in 2025. **Visit USAC at Booth #115** at the **Computers in Libraries Conference** to be held **March 25 – 27, 2025** in Arlington, Virginia. [Event link](#).

### Training Recordings Available on Demand

USAC offered a series of online training sessions for E-Rate program participants in January and February to help prepare for the FY2025 FCC Form 471 application filing window. You can watch a recording using the links available under **Previous Trainings** on the E-Rate [Webinars](#) page. To watch a webinar recording, click **Watch** next to the session on the Webinars page.

- **E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process (FCC Forms 470, 471, ESL, etc.) Q&A Session** (Tuesday, February 11). E-Rate subject-matter experts answered questions about the competitive bidding process, Category Two budgets, and the Eligible Services List. View [webinar slides](#).
- **E-Rate Service Provider Selection and the FCC Form 471 Q&A Session** (Thursday, January 30). E-Rate subject-matter experts provided an overview of how to apply for program discounts on the FCC Form 471. View [webinar slides](#).
- **E-Rate Competitive Bidding (FCC Form 470) Q&A Session** (January 23, 2025). E-Rate subject-matter experts walked through competitive bidding and the FCC Form 470 with a focus on the FCC Form Guiding Statements document. View [webinar slides](#).
- **E-Rate Eligible Services Q&A Session** (January 16, 2025). E-Rate subject-matter experts provided an overview of FY2025 E-Rate eligible services for applicants and service providers. View [webinar slides](#).

## New E-Rate News Brief Archive Page

The [E-Rate News Brief Archive](#) has a new look and feel. The information is still there, but how you access it is a little different. The new Archive page covers E-Rate News Briefs from 2006 to 2022. To search the archives, follow the instructions on the Archive page. The existing E-Rate news brief archive tool will be sunset on Friday, February 28, 2025. News Briefs for 2023 to the present are accessible on the primary [News Brief](#) page.

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