



## E-Rate News Brief

April 17, 2025

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### E-Rate Tips

- **USAC Website Maintenance Tonight.** USAC will perform scheduled maintenance on USAC.org on April 17 from 9 p.m. to midnight Eastern Time (E.T.). During this time, users may experience disruptions or outages when visiting USAC.org. We apologize for any inconvenience.
- **FY2025 Window Waiver Requests.** If you plan to request a waiver of the Funding Year (FY) 2025 application filing window deadline, **be sure to certify and submit** your FCC Form 471 in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) **before you file your waiver request** with the FCC. Note that you will receive an out-of-window status notification after you certify your form. If the waiver request is granted, the FCC Form 471 will be treated as timely filed during the filing window. See the [E-Rate Appeals Waiver Guide](#).
- **Interim SPIN and RAL.** If you used the interim Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) 143666666 to submit your FY2025 funding requests, submit a **Receipt Acknowledgement Letter (RAL) modification request** to provide the actual SPIN. View the [FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter Modification Guide](#).
- **E-Rate Webinars Page Update.** The E-Rate [Webinars](#) page has a new look. The new page will now cover two years of webinars. If you need information from a webinar from prior years, please contact our Customer Service Center at (888) 203-8100 or create a customer service case in EPC.

- **Updated EPC Training Site Coming Soon.** The EPC Training Site will be transitioned to a new EPC training site **on May 1, 2025**. The transition will preserve existing user logins, entity information, and forms when it comes back online on May 1. Note that any bookmarked URLs may not work after the training site comes back online. Visit the [EPC Training Site](#) page to learn how to request training accounts to practice filling in and submitting FCC Forms 470, 471, 472 (BEAR), 474 (SPI), and 486. If you need assistance in setting up an account, contact [EPctrainingsite@usac.org](mailto:EPctrainingsite@usac.org).
- **Visit our updated webpages** including the new [Program Integrity](#) page, where you can find helpful resources to learn about reporting program violations, competitive bidding, application and invoice reviews, and recent FCC investigations.

## Funding Year (FY) 2024 Commitments

**FY2024.** USAC released FY2024 Wave 51 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on April 10. As of April 16, FY2024 commitments total over \$2.65 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.

## Service Providers: Have You Filed the FCC Form 473?

Have you checked your filing status for [FCC Form 473](#) (Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC)) in EPC for FY2025 and prior funding years? USAC started sending reminders to service providers who have not yet filed their annual SPAC on April 1, 2025, and will send subsequent reminders periodically through June 30, 2025.

FCC rules require service providers to annually file a SPAC (47 C.F.R. § 54.504(f)) and a SPAC Form must be on file before USAC can pay invoices – FCC Forms 472 (BEAR) or FCC Forms 474 (SPI) – for that specific funding year. Only **Full or Partial Rights users** can complete the SPAC in EPC. For step-by-step directions on how to complete the SPAC online, go to the [FCC Form 473 \(SPAC\) User Guide](#).

Service providers can check the status of their FCC Form 473 for a given funding year by opening their organization's summary page in EPC. Applicants and Service Providers can also use the [E-Rate FRN Invoicing Deadline Tool](#) to lookup the status of any Service Provider Identification Numbers (SPINs) and check the **SPAC Filed?** column.

## Overview of the PIA Review Process

[Program Integrity Assurance](#) (PIA) is the process USAC uses to review FCC Forms 471 for compliance with E-Rate program rules and requirements. USAC reviews the information on your application and may contact you with additional questions on specific items. Below is a summary of the Initial Review, Final Review, and Quality Assurance steps in the PIA review process.

### Initial Review

USAC assigns an Initial Reviewer to process your FCC Form 471. The information you provide on your form may be sufficient for the Initial Reviewer to complete your review. If not, the Initial Reviewer prepares the questions that USAC must ask based on the information you provided (or did not provide) on your application.

The Initial Reviewer issues questions to you via EPC and you will receive an email when the questions

are available. If you are a public school or library, we also notify your state E-Rate coordinator.

- You can click the link provided in the email to access our questions. You can also navigate to the **Pending Inquiries** section of your organization's landing page in EPC and, using the drop-down menus, choose "FCC Form 471" for the **Type** and "2025" for the **Funding Year**.
- Read each question carefully. The inquiry may require you to provide a Yes/No answer, a short response in a text field, or a file or scanned document.
- Only one user can work on a specific inquiry at one time, although different users can work on different inquiries simultaneously. One user can allow another user to review and/or edit their work by saving a draft response and then exiting the inquiry.

**Please respond promptly to any PIA requests for information or documentation.** Reviewers will continue their attempts to contact applicants to ensure that they are available to respond to inquiries.

During the PIA review process, you always have the following options:

- If you do not understand one or more questions, you can ask your Initial Reviewer what the question means or what information USAC expects in your response.
- You can ask for more time to respond. However, note that your Initial Reviewer may not be able to return to your application quickly once you provide the information.
- You can ask to speak to a manager if you are having trouble communicating with your Initial Reviewer. USAC will not penalize you for doing so, and the manager can help you understand the questions USAC is asking and the responses USAC expects to receive.

If USAC intends to modify or deny a funding request, your Initial Reviewer will notify you through EPC. You can provide additional information at this point, but you must respond quickly because we do not stop the review process to wait for a response.

### **Final Review and Quality Assurance**

Final Review is a review of the work done during Initial Review conducted by a more experienced reviewer. The Final Reviewer checks each step of the Initial Review process to verify that they followed the correct procedures, asked the appropriate questions, and received complete answers. If the Final Reviewer has any concerns, they will return the application to the Initial Reviewer for follow-up.

As a result, your Initial Reviewer may contact you with additional questions to gather the required information that they did not request or receive during Initial Review. Make sure you understand what supplemental information is being requested and that you respond as quickly and as accurately as possible.

Some applications go through a third level of review called Quality Assurance (QA). QA reviews are an additional check to verify that the PIA reviewers correctly completed all parts of the application review. As with the Final Review, the QA Reviewer may return applications to the Initial Reviewer for follow-up requests.

The review process is not linear. If a QA Reviewer returns an application to the Initial Reviewer, the status on the progress bar at the top of your FCC Form 471 may move to the left – that is, to an earlier review status. If you do see such a movement, monitor your email in case the Initial Reviewer attempts to contact you.

## FY2025 Application Filing Window Next Steps

The application filing window for FY2025 has closed. Below we provide a few reminders for actions you should take while the application process is still fresh in your mind.

**Review your FCC Form 471 and submit a RAL Modification Request to correct or update information.** Double-check your certified [FCC Form 471](#) for accuracy. If you find any information that should be corrected or updated, you can submit a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) Modification Request. To learn how to submit modification requests for your FCC Form(s) 471, view the [FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter Modification Guide](#).

**Entity information.** If your EPC entity profile was locked before you could update the information for your organization and/or your member entities, you can file a RAL Modification Request to provide your updates. Specifically, you should pay attention to the following:

- **School districts:** Review the contact information for your school district and each of your individual schools, along with their actual or estimated student counts (for your Category One discount calculation and your Category Two budget calculation), their approved [Community Eligibility Provision](#) (CEP) percentage (if they have one), their [urban/rural status](#), and their entity attributes (such as public, private, or Tribal).
- **Library systems:** Review the contact information for your library system and each of your library branches, bookmobiles, and kiosks, along with their square footage, their urban/rural status, and their entity attributes (such as public, private, or Tribal). You must have identified one library as the main branch and identified the school district in which the main branch is located.
- **Independent schools and libraries:** Review the contact information for your entity and your entity information necessary for the Category One discount calculation and the Category Two budget calculation as noted above.
- **Consortia:** Review your own contact information and the list of [consortium](#) members you reported as receiving or sharing services on each FCC Form 471.

**FCC Registration Number.** Check this 10-digit number to make sure it is correct, especially if this is the first year you have filed E-Rate program forms. To verify your [FCC Registration Number](#), you can use the FCC's [Commission Registration System](#) (CORES).

**Costs and cost allocations.** Check your math. The pre-discount costs of your funding requests should match the information in the [contract\(s\)](#) or other documentation you used to prepare your form. If you notice any incorrect information in any of the above fields, you can submit a RAL Modification Request to correct this information.

**Review and retain the competitive bidding process documentation that you relied on to complete your FCC Form 471.** As part of your application filing process, you may have produced, accessed, or received many documents, and you may need to refer to one or more of these documents at various times during the application review process. If you collect and store this documentation in a manner that allows you or your successor to easily access and produce these documents, you can respond much more quickly to USAC requests.

All E-Rate program participants – applicants, service providers, and consortia – are required to maintain documentation that demonstrates compliance with the statutory or regulatory requirements for all E-Rate program purchases of services and equipment for a period of 10 years after the latter of the last day of the applicable funding year or the service delivery deadline for the funding request.

We recommend that all applicants and services providers take the time now to organize and

save [all documents related to your application](#) in a manner that will allow you to easily locate and retrieve them for any future needs. Go to the [E-Rate Document Retention](#) page and review the [E-Rate Program List of Documents to Retain for Audits and to Show Compliance with Program Rules](#) to learn more.

**Prepare for PIA review.** During [PIA review](#), we verify certain information on your FCC Form 471, and we may have additional questions to help us in our review. We will notify you by email and in your EPC **News** feed if there are PIA questions waiting for you to answer. This would be a good time to alert your service provider that you may need help with network diagrams, product descriptions, and other data that they should be able to supply. Please respond promptly to any PIA requests for information or documentation.

**Monitor your contact email address and your EPC account.** The contact person you identified on your FCC Form 471 should regularly monitor their email account and EPC account so that they know when we have posted PIA review questions. You can file a RAL Modification Request to update your holiday/vacation contact information if we should use a different email address or telephone number to contact you, or if you have empowered someone else to answer questions on your behalf.

**Monitor the status of applications for your district or state.** You can check the status of your funding request using the Open Data [E-Rate FRN Status Tool FY2016+](#). The tool has easy-to-use filters so you can quickly isolate your data by Billed Entity Number (BEN), Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN), state, or Funding Year. View a [video](#) on how to use the tool.

### **Update Your Contract Award Date to Aid Quicker PIA Reviews**

If you are using a new or existing contract on your FY2025 FCC Form 471, you must have a contract record for that contract in your EPC profile. A contract record provides specific details about a contract – e.g., the establishing FCC Form 470, the number of bids received, the service provider, the contract terms, the contract award date (CAD), etc. – so that this information can be auto-populated from your profile to the appropriate funding request on your FCC Form 471.

It is particularly important to make sure the CAD is accurate for the contract you cited on your FCC Form 471. An accurate CAD and uploading a copy of the contract to the contract profile can help PIA reviewers expedite the review process by avoiding additional outreach.

To create a contract record in your EPC profile, go to the organization page for the parent organization (independent school, school district, independent library, library system, or consortium), click **Contracts** from the menu choices at the top of the page, then choose **Manage Contracts**, and click on **Add a New Contract**.

- You do not need to create a new contract record for a multi-year contract or a contract with voluntary extensions, if you previously created the contract record in EPC.
- For a contract that has been voluntarily extended through FY2025, you can cite the existing contract record on the appropriate funding request on your FCC Form 471 and then enter the extended date in the field labeled "What is the date your contract expires for the current term of the contract?"

If you have a new contract or need to make changes to an existing contract record, **you must create a new contract record**. EPC does not allow edits to a contract record after it has been submitted. You are encouraged – but not required – to upload a copy of your contract into your contract record. 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.

View the [How to Create a Contract Record](#) video for a demonstration on entering your contract information.

## **RAL Modification Requests and Post-Commitment Corrections**

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

Many times, FCC Form 471 applications are submitted with multiple types of equipment placed on a single funding request (FRN) Line Item, which can slow down the PIA review process. **You can use the RAL Modification Request process to separate unique types of equipment into separate FRN Line Items**, which will help reviewers more quickly complete your form reviews.

Applicants receive the RAL in their EPC **News** feed after submitting and 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, view the [FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter Modification Guide](#).

If USAC has issued an FCDL, you must request any modifications through a post-commitment request such as a [Service Substitution](#) request, a [SPIN Change](#) request, an [FCC Form 500](#), or an [Appeal](#).

## **2025 Training and Outreach**

USAC is coming to an event near you in 2025. Below are some events we will attend in the next few months where we can answer your E-Rate questions and upcoming E-Rate Webinars.

### **Conferences**

- **American Libraries Association (ALA) Annual Conference** (Pennsylvania): June 26–30, 2025. [Event link](#).

### **Upcoming Webinars**

#### **Beginning E-Rate Services Webinar**

**May 15, 2025**

2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T.

#### [Register](#)

- This webinar will provide E-Rate participants with a high-level overview of the next steps in the E-Rate process after equipment and services are funded. After the presentation, there will be a live Q&A session. It's recommended for E-Rate participants at all levels.

### **Recordings Available**

- **Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) Review and Selective Review Process Webinar**

(April 3, 2025). This webinar provided E-Rate participants with an overview of the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) FCC Form 471 review process, preparing for a PIA review, handling PIA inquiries, the selective review process, and Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDL). View [webinar slides](#).

To subscribe, click here: [Subscribe](#).

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