# E-Rate News Brief

**July 24, 2025**

## Contents

### E-Rate Tips

- As a reminder, **Funding Year (FY) 2025 applicants who have received a funding commitment** from USAC and whose services have started can certify an FCC Form 486 (*Receipt of Service Confirmation and Children's Internet Protection Act Certification Form*) to inform USAC that services have started. Subsequently, invoicing can begin.

- **Service providers are required to submit and certify an annual FCC Form 473** (*Service Provider Annual Certification* (SPAC) *Form*). USAC cannot pay an invoice from either an applicant (FCC Form 472/BEAR) or a service provider (FCC Form 474/SPI) **unless both the FCC Form 486 and the FCC Form 473 have been certified and approved for FY2025 funding requests**. See last month's news brief for filing requirements.

- **Visit our updated webpages** including FCC Form 470 Filing, How to File FCC Form 472 in EPC, and How to File the FCC Form 474 in EPC.

## Funding Year (FY) 2025 Commitments

**FY2025.** USAC released FY2025 Wave 13 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on July 17. As of July 23, FY2025 commitments total over $1.54 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 also use the [E-Rate Search Commitments Tool](#) to look up prior funding year commitment data.

## Prepare for the Upcoming Competitive Bidding and FCC Form 470 Process

The FY2026 FCC Form 470, which must be submitted and completed to start the competitive bidding process, became available July 1 in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC). Applicants with long procurement cycles or other reasons for starting their FY2026 competitive bidding processes early may complete and certify this form in EPC. The FY2026 FCC Form 470 remains unchanged from last year.

Please reference the following resources where you can find more information about how to comply with the E-Rate program's [Competitive Bidding](#) rules:

- **Applicants**: How to keep the bidding process [open & fair](#), the [28-day waiting period](#) before signing a contract, [evaluating bids and selecting a service provider](#), Competitive Bidding [Infographic](#), and [Competitive Bidding Frequently Asked Questions](#).

- **Service Providers**: How to [respond to bids](#), requirements for [Lowest Corresponding Price](#) (LCP), Competitive Bidding [Document Retention](#) (List of Documents to Retain), Competitive Bidding [Infographic](#), and searching for FCC Form 470s using the [FCC Form 470 Download Tool](#).

## FCC Form 470 Reminders

The [FCC Form 470](#) (*Description of Services Requested and Certification Form*) is the form used by applicants to request bids for eligible services and equipment and to initiate their required competitive bidding process for the E-Rate program. Below are a few reminders about the FCC Form 470 if you are ready to begin your competitive bidding process for FY2026.  The FCC Form 470 is available from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027.

**You must file the FCC Form 470 in EPC.**
To start an FCC Form 470, you must have a [One Portal](#) username and password to access EPC. Your EPC account administrator can set up an EPC user account for you if you do not already have one, and our system will then create a One Portal account for you. After your accounts are set up, you can log in to One Portal, choose EPC from your dashboard, and click the **FCC Form 470 link** at the top of your EPC landing page to start an FCC Form 470.

**Your organization's profile must be set up in EPC before you can file a program form, including an FCC Form 470.**
If you are new to the E-Rate program and looking to set up an account for your entity through EPC, go to the [School and Library Eligibility](#) page or to the [E-Rate Checklist for Tribal Libraries](#) (this resource applies to all libraries) to learn how to do so. Your billed entity information (including address, contact information, and attributes for the schools in a school district or libraries in a library system) are pulled into program forms from your organization's profile in EPC.

You do not need to update your student counts (schools) or square footage (libraries) before filing the FCC Form 470. However, the system will count the number of recipients of service based on your current organization profile in EPC. If you cannot update your organization's profile

information in EPC to reflect added or removed individual schools, library branches, or consortium members, you can provide updated information in the narrative fields in your FCC Form 470 and in the document(s) you attach to your form (see below).

**If you issue a request for proposals (RFP) and/or RFP documents, you must upload these documents to your FCC Form 470.**
If you are issuing an RFP and/or one or more RFP documents, you are required to upload those documents to your FCC Form 470. We use "RFP" and "RFP document" generically to refer to any bidding document that describes your project and requested services and/or equipment in more detail than that provided on the FCC Form 470.

An RFP document can be a formal bidding document – for example, an invitation for bid (IFB) or request for quote (RFQ) – or it could be any document issued as part of your competitive bidding process that provides more information to potential bidders. The actual RFP itself (along with all subsequent addenda) must be made publicly available through USAC's website by uploading the RFP or RFP document to your FCC Form 470 in EPC.

In addition, if you issue RFP documents **AFTER** you certify an FCC Form 470, you **MUST** upload them to that certified FCC Form 470.

**Certify the form online in EPC.**
The FCC Form 470 is posted to tools on the USAC website after it has been certified in EPC (see below).

If the user who creates the form does not have the necessary rights (permissions) to certify it, EPC will create a task for users within the organization who do.

- Users with partial rights to the FCC Form 470 can complete the form but cannot certify the form.

- Users with full rights to FCC Form 470 can complete, edit, and certify the form in EPC.

**Your receipt notification will appear in your EPC News feed after you certify your form.**
Your FCC Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter (RNL) that confirms your certification will appear in the **News** tab in your EPC account shortly after you certify your form. You can submit requests to correct certain errors through EPC by clicking **Related Actions** at the top of the form.

You can also access your RNL by navigating to your FCC Form 470 in EPC and clicking the **News** option from the menu near the top of the page (**NOT** the blue News tab). In this way, you will only see news items that apply to this form.
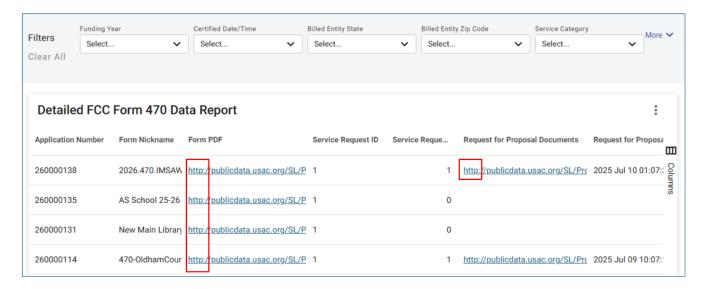
**Service providers can view filed FCC Forms 470 either through EPC or on the USAC website.**
EPC has a search and download function that allows service providers with accounts in EPC to search for certified FCC Forms 470. On the service provider landing page, click the **Search FCC Form 470** link. You can download the form data from the search results as a set of CSV (comma separated value) files.

Service providers can also view a PDF version of a single form along with all of its attached RFP documents and detailed information for multiple forms in the E-Rate FCC Form 470 Download Tool on the E-Rate Tools page on the USAC website.

## Update to E-Rate Open Data Download Instructions

E-Rate data is available for the public to review and download on USAC's Open Data webpages. Recently, we have heard from stakeholders about issues downloading documents from within Open Data tools. The issue involves commonly used web browsers that are gradually increasing their warnings to users about the security risks of downloading documents from HTTP links such as those shown below.



When accessing documents via Open Data links, some browsers may not automatically initiate downloads after clicking on the link or a security flag may appear. This is due to changes in the criteria used by certain browsers to verify that the download is secure. Follow the instructions below depending on your situation.

- *If file download is not automatic*, you can right click the URL, select "copy link address," and paste it in a new browser tab to initiate the download.

- *If a security flag appears*, you can select "keep."

USAC is in the process of migrating these documents to HTTPS links and will notify users in a future news brief and on our website.

## Learn About USAC's Beneficiary and Contributor Audit Program

As part of the Beneficiary and Contributor Audit Program (BCAP), USAC's Audit and Assurance Division (AAD) initiates audits each year to assess compliance with E-Rate program rules. When a BCAP audit is announced, the auditor calls the main point of contact (POC) for the selected school or library (for beneficiary audits) or the service provider (for service provider audits).

For service provider audits, AAD also notifies the beneficiaries receiving services from the audited provider to inform them that an audit is underway and that AAD may reach out for assistance with specific documentation requests, such as competitive bidding records.

For beneficiary audits, AAD notifies the service providers associated with the funding requests selected for audit to make them aware that their customer is being audited and that AAD may request supporting documentation.

State E-Rate coordinators are also copied on audit announcement emails for awareness. Please note that the email sent to the state coordinator is not the same communication shared with the audited entity.

Audit-related documents are shared securely through **Box**, USAC's current file-sharing platform. In accordance with USAC policy:

- Documents are **not sent as email attachments** to prevent unauthorized or inadvertent sharing.

- All files are **uploaded to a secure Box folder**, which is accessible only to the audited entity's main POC (and any other individuals expressly authorized to access the folder).

- Files in Box are **password-protected**, and the password is provided during the announcement call or entrance conference.

- Box **setup instructions** are shared with the main POC to ensure secure access.

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.

If your organization receives a BCAP audit notification, please follow the instructions provided. Questions can be directed to auditinquiry@usac.org.

## 2025 Training and Outreach

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

**In-Person Training – Registration Open**

E-Rate experts will provide training, discuss program updates, and answer questions from new and experienced participants. Registration for these two in-person training events is now open. For more information on these events and to register, visit the In-Person E-Rate Training Events or the E-Rate Announcements webpage.

- **E-Rate Training – Denver**: **September 9, 2025**, at the Lowry Conference Center located in the Community College of Aurora, Lowry Campus, 1061 Akron Way, Denver, Colorado.

- **E-Rate Training – Washington, DC**: **September 16, 2025**, at the Federal Communications Commission headquarters, 45 L Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. There will be an option to watch a livestream of this training.

**Conferences**

- **Association for Rural and Small Libraries** (ARSL) **Conference**, **September 17–20, 2025** in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Event Link.

**Upcoming Webinars**

**Open Data Webinar Part 1: Open Data Overview**
**August 14, 2025**
2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)

[Register](#)

Enhance your E-Rate program experience with Open Data, USAC's data sharing platform. This webinar is the first in a two-part series and provides an overview of the E-Rate specific tools and datasets in Open Data.

**Open Data Webinar Part 2: Creating Reports and Visualizations**
**August 21, 2025**
2 p.m. to 3 p.m. ET

[Register](#)

This follow-up webinar to the Open Data Overview (Webinar 1) dives more deeply into using E-Rate data tools. Participants can expect tangible examples on how to create custom reports and visuals for an enhanced program experience. To be successful in this webinar, you should have attended Webinar 1.

**Webinar Recordings**

- **Service Provider Webinar** (June 26, 2025). This [webinar](#) provided service providers new to the E-Rate program with an understanding of their role in delivering E-Rate-supported equipment and services to applicants. View [webinar slides](#).

- **FCC Form 470/Competitive Bidding Webinar** (July 17, 2025). This [webinar](#) provided E-Rate participants with information on how to file the FCC Form 470 and about the E-Rate competitive bidding process. This webinar is designed for applicants and service providers of all levels of E-Rate experience, with an emphasis on beginner-level participants. View [webinar slides](#).