



E-Rate News Brief

September 23, 2025

Contents

- [E-Rate Tips](#)
- [Funding Year \(FY\) 2025 Commitments](#)
- [FY2024 Invoicing Deadline Reminders for Recurring Services](#)
- [FY2025 FCC Form 486 Deadline Reminder](#)
- [Competitive Bidding Reminders for FY2026](#)
- [EPC Administrative Window Opens October 15, 2025](#)
- [Updating Account Administrators in EPC: Applicants and Service Providers](#)
- [Fall Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program \(T-LEAP\) Kick-Off Training October 1, 2025](#)
- [2025 Training and Outreach](#)

E-Rate Tips

- For **applicants that received an extension of the FY2024 September 30, 2025 deadline** for delivery and installation of **nonrecurring services**, you should work with your service providers to extend your contracts to cover the additional time if necessary. You can then report the new contract expiration date to USAC by filing an [FCC Form 500](#).
- **Visit our updated webpages** including [Starting Services](#), [EPC Administrative Window](#), and [FCC Form 471 Filing](#).

Funding Year (FY) 2025 Commitments

FY2025. USAC released FY2025 Wave 22 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on September 18. As of September 22, FY2025 commitments total over \$2.03 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.

FY2024 Invoicing Deadline Reminders for Recurring Services

In most cases, **October 28, 2025 is the deadline** to file an invoice or to request an invoice deadline extension (IDE) **for most Funding Year (FY) 2024 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) 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.

FY2025 FCC Form 486 Deadline Reminder

Generally, **October 28, 2025 is also the deadline to file an FY2025 FCC Form 486** if your FCDL **is dated on or before July 1, 2025 and your service start date is July 1, 2025**. If these conditions apply to you, please submit and certify your [FCC Form 486](#) on or before this deadline.

If your FCC Form 486 appears to be late, we will send you 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 has changed, your deadline may have changed as well.

This 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, 2025, or whose FCDLs are dated after July 1, 2025 (including any that have not yet been issued), will have an FCC Form 486 deadline later than

October 28, 2025. However, we encourage you to submit and certify your FCC Form 486 as soon as possible after services start for FY2025 and 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.

Competitive Bidding Reminders for FY2026

The FCC Form 470 and competitive bidding are the initial steps in the E-Rate process and can be used for multiple years. Now that applicants can submit and certify their FY2026 FCC Forms 470 to start their competitive bidding processes, we are providing some reminders to help you through the remainder of the competitive bidding process.

Start FY2026 off right by setting yourself up for success in the program. Ensure you have followed all the FCC's competitive bidding regulations for the E-Rate program with this year's competitive bidding checklist:

- **Provide sufficient information** for potential bidders to **provide a comprehensive, responsive bid** (e.g., for managed internal broadband services, specify the exact equipment/services to be managed). Include all information needed on the FCC Form 470/RFP (request for proposals) for potential vendors to provide a comprehensive, responsive bid.
- **Ensure an [open and fair process](#)**. Provide any FCC Form 470, request for proposals (RFP), and other information/updates in EPC for all potential bidders for at least 28 days and consider all responsive bids in your bid evaluation. Answer questions from potential bidders and make the answers available to all potential bidders. **Potential bidders** (i.e., service providers) **cannot help you complete or file the FCC Form 470**.
- **Abide by the E-Rate Gift Rules**. Receipt or solicitation of gifts by applicants from service providers (and vice versa) is a competitive bidding violation. Gift prohibitions are always applicable – not just during the competitive bidding process. View the [Gift Rules video](#) for more details on the gift rules.
- Ensure that **all equipment/services you request on the FCC Form 471 are listed on the FCC Form 470/RFP** (including **all requested bandwidth speeds**). Specifically for Internet Access/Data Transmission Services, applicants should ensure that speeds of services requested on the FCC Form 471 are reflected on the FCC Form 470/RFP.
- **Wait at least the full [28-day competitive bidding period](#)**. Select a service provider **after your allowable contract date (ACD) and before certifying the FCC Form 471**. The ACD is found on your FCC Form 470 receipt notification letter (RNL). Learn how the [28-day waiting period is calculated](#).
- Ensure **price is the primary evaluation factor** (highest weighted factor). Only the costs of **eligible** equipment/services should be evaluated in this criterion.

THE COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS

allows applicants to identify and request products and/or services so that potential service providers can review those requests and submit bids for them.

The process consists of five steps:

- Get Ready to File**
 - Perform a needs assessment
 - Review your state and local procurement rules
 - Review the [Eligible Services List](#)
- File and certify an FCC Form 470**
 - Provide sufficient information for potential vendors to provide a comprehensive bid (e.g., for managed internal broadband services specify the exact equipment/services to be managed)
 - Potential bidders (service providers) cannot help you file the FCC Form 470
 - You have the option to submit a Request for Proposals (RFP) with your form
 - There are [competitive bidding exemptions](#) for certain Category 1 and Category 2 (libraries only) equipment/services
 - After you certify your FCC Form 470, USAC issues a Receipt Notification Letter (RNL) with your Allowable Contract Date (ACD) – the earliest date you can enter into an agreement or sign a contract
- Ensure an open and fair process**
 - Provide any FCC Form 470, RFP and other information/updates in EPC for all potential bidders for at least 28 days
 - "Open" means there are no secrets in the process and that all bidders know what is required of them
 - "Fair" means that all bidders are treated the same and that no bidder has project information others do not
 - Abide by the [Gift Rules](#)
- Wait at least 28 days** before selecting a service provider
 - The ACD (included on your RNL) is 28 days after the FCC Form 470 is certified
 - The day you **certify** the FCC Form 470 is day 1
 - If the FCC Form 470 is certified on the 1st of the month, you may select a service provider **on or after** the 29th of the month
 - If you later **change the information** needed to respond to the bid, you must restart the 28 days
 - If you issue an RFP on a later date, you must restart the 28 days
 - State or Local procurement rules may require a longer waiting period
- Select a service provider**
 - Select a service provider after your ACD and before certifying the FCC Form 471
 - Consider all responsive bids
 - Use a [Bid Evaluation Matrix](#)
 - Ensure price is the primary evaluation factor (highest weighted factor). Only the costs of eligible goods/services should be evaluated in this criterion
 - Enter into a legally binding agreement and document selection date (after the minimum 28-day waiting period)
 - Upload your legally binding agreements and contracts to EPC

Publication Date: 8/28/2024

Retain all competitive bidding documentation, including the Bid Evaluation Matrix, for ten years after the last day you receive services or the end of that funding year, using whichever date is later.

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Available for Public Use

- **Follow your state and local competitive bidding rules.** Ensure that you are following all applicable state and local procurement rules and regulations in addition to the requirements of the E-Rate program.
- **Retain all necessary competitive bidding documentation** for at least ten (10) years after the last day you receive services or the end of that funding year, whichever date is later. View the [E-Rate Program List of Documents to Retain for Audits and to Show Compliance with Program Rules](#) list. If a consultant or another representative is handling your competitive bidding process, you are still responsible for retaining your competitive bidding documentation for the 10-year period.

For a comprehensive review of all things competitive bidding, [register for the Pre-Commitment webinar](#) on September 25.

View the [How to File an FCC Form 470](#) learning module and the [FY2025+ FCC Form 470 Services Guiding Statements Table](#) on the USAC website to help you get started with your FY2026 competitive bidding process.

EPC Administrative Window Opens October 15, 2025

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 FY2026 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 15, 2025** and will close **shortly before the FY2026 application filing window opens in early 2026**. After this time, applicant profiles will be locked, and you will not be able to make changes to your profile information.

FY2026 will be the first 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 and [join our October 21 Administrative Window webinar](#) to learn more.

Updating Account Administrators in EPC: Applicants and Service Providers

Some applicants who intend to update their profiles in EPC during the current administrative window have realized that they do not have an active Account Administrator and cannot perform their updates. If you are in this situation, you can follow the guidance below.

If your Account Administrator is leaving or changing responsibilities and another employee will take over their duties, the current Account Administrator can assign those duties to the employee by using the **Modify Account Administrator** function in EPC.

If your Account Administrator is no longer available, call the E-Rate Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100 for assistance. Note that you must be an authorized employee of the applicant to assume the Account Administrator role. The Account Administrator role cannot be assigned to a consultant, attorney, or other third-party representative of the applicant.

- If you are already a user on your entity's EPC account and are an authorized employee of the applicant, CSC can assign the Account Administrator role to you.
- If you are not a user on your entity's EPC account and are an authorized employee of the applicant, CSC must first create you as a user on the account. After you have established your username and password and accepted the Terms and Conditions for using EPC, CSC can then assign the Account Administrator role to you.

Go to the [Customer Service Center Documentation](#) page to learn what is required to add or update Account Administrator information.

Fall Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program (T-LEAP) Kick-Off Training October 1, 2025

You are invited to the [Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program](#) (T-LEAP) fall kick-off and information session. T-LEAP provides one-on-one assistance to Tribal libraries, including eligible Tribal College and University (TCU) libraries, seeking to request E-Rate support.

During the session we will provide an overview of the E-Rate program, describe T-LEAP's requirements and application process, and hear from a guest presenter on how to assess and identify your library's E-Rate equipment and service needs. There will be time for participants to ask question.

Audience: Tribal library applicants, including TCU libraries.

The teleconference will take place on **Wednesday, October 1, 2025, at 3 p.m. E.T.** [Register](#).

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](#).

Fall 2025 Training Series Webinars

- **E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process** on **September 25, 2025**, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T. This webinar will discuss the E-Rate Pre-Commitment process. This includes how to get started, competitive bidding, applying for funding, and Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review. [Register](#).
- **Category Two (C2) Budgets** on **October 16, 2025**, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T. In this applicant-focused presentation, USAC will provide an overview of C2 budgets and C2 budget guidance for the new FY2026-2030 C2 budget cycle. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session. [Register](#).
- **The EPC Administrative Window** on **October 21, 2025**, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T. USAC will discuss the EPC Administrative Window – the period during which applicants can make updates to their EPC profile information to prepare for the upcoming FCC Form 471 application filing window. We will discuss how to update your EPC profiles, and some Administrative Window best practices. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session. [Register](#).
- **E-Rate Post-Commitment Process** on **October 23, 2025**, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T. USAC will discuss the applicant's roles and responsibilities in the E-Rate Post-Commitment Process and other post-commitment activities including filing the FCC Form 486, the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), service substitutions, commitment adjustments,

appeals, and more. After the presentation, there will be time for questions and answers. [Register](#).

- **Invoicing Webinar on October 30, 2025**, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. E.T. This webinar is designed to help E-Rate program participants (applicants and service providers) understand the invoicing process. Topics for the invoicing webinar will include the steps necessary to prepare for invoicing, filing an FCC Form 498, filing invoicing forms FCC Form 472 (BEAR) and FCC Form 474 (SPI), the invoicing review process, Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC) as it relates to invoicing, record keeping, and Open Data. [Register](#).
- **Eligible Services 101 on November 6, 2025**, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T. This webinar will review FY2026 equipment and services that are eligible for E-Rate funding. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session. There are no prerequisites for this webinar. [Register](#).

Webinar Recordings

- **Fall Training: E-Rate Program Overview** (September 18, 2025). This [webinar](#) provided an overview of the E-Rate application process and explains basic program concepts. We will also highlight the recent FCC Form 470 updates and managing your Category Two budget.

In-Person Training Materials Available

E-Rate experts provided training, discussed program updates, and answered questions from new and experienced participants in Denver, Colorado (September 9) and Washington, D.C. (September 16). Information on these events and presentation materials are available on the [In-Person E-Rate Training Events](#) webpage.

Conferences

- **New England Library Association Conference, October 26–28, 2025** in Newport, Rhode Island. [Event Link](#).
- **Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition AnchorNets** in Crystal City, Virginia, **October 29–31, 2025**. [Event link](#).

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

©1997-2025 Universal Service Administrative Company, All Rights Reserved.
USAC | 700 12th Street NW | Suite 900 | Washington, DC 20005