



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

E-Rate

E-Rate News Brief

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Contents

- [E-Rate Tips](#)
- [Funding Year \(FY\) 2026 Commitments](#)
- [Prepare for the Upcoming Competitive Bidding and FCC Form 470 Process](#)
- [FCC Form 470 Reminders](#)
- [Learn About USAC's Beneficiary and Contributor Audit Program](#)
- [E-Rate Outreach and Training](#)

E-Rate Tips

- As a reminder, **Funding Year (FY) 2026 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. **Note:** The FCC Form 486 will be eliminated starting in FY2028 and the CIPA compliance certifications will be transferred to the FCC Form 471. Please be sure to file the FCC Form 486 in FY2026 and FY2027.
- **Service providers are required to submit and certify an annual FCC Form 473** (*Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form*). USAC cannot disburse funds for an invoice from either an applicant (FCC Form 472/Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR)) or a service provider (FCC Form 474/Service Provider Invoice (SPI)) **unless both the FCC Form 486 and the FCC Form 473/SPAC have been certified and approved for FY2026 funding requests.** See [last month's news brief](#) for filing requirements.
- **E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) Updates.** USAC made a few updates to EPC including a **News** feed update for **Quarterly E-Rate Payment Authorization Reports**. The reports can now be found in the **News** feed by entering the Billed Entity Name or Billed Entity Number in the News feed search box. Also, the FCC Form 473/SPAC is now available to view as a **Record** within EPC Invoicing. Service Provider users can navigate to **My Forms and Requests** and select **FCC Form 473** to view SPAC forms filed in EPC.

Funding Year (FY) 2026 Commitments

FY2026. USAC released FY2026 Wave 12 on July 16. As of July 22, FY2026 commitments total over \$1.4 billion.

On the date that Funding Commitment Decision Letters (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 **FY2027 FCC Form 470**, which must be submitted and completed to start the competitive bidding process, **became available July 1, 2026**, in EPC. Applicants with long procurement cycles or other reasons for starting their FY2027 competitive bidding processes early may complete and certify this form in EPC.

The FY2027 FCC Form 470 was updated to display guiding language on the Category Two service selection screen and to remove ineligible Bus Wi-Fi and Wi-Fi Hotspot services. The FY2027 FCC Form 470 now includes two additional options under the manufacturer list dropdown to include frequently requested manufacturers and includes the required "or equivalent" language when selecting "Other" from the manufacturer dropdown menu.

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](#). The March 31, 2026, [Service Provider Webinar](#) provides service providers with information on how to find applicant service requests and how to bid on services. View [webinar slides](#).

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. The [How to File an FCC Form 470](#) learning module and interactive user guide walks you through the steps for submitting Category One and Category Two bid requests for equipment and services and the new EPC calculations for the Allowable Contract Date (ACD).

Below are a few reminders about the FCC Form 470 if you are ready to begin your competitive bidding process for FY2027, which runs from July 1, 2027, to June 30, 2028.

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). 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, libraries, 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 the corresponding 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 have the required permissions.

- 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 a specific 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 specific form along with all of its corresponding 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.

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 E-Rate 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 auditingquiry@usac.org.

Deadline Approaching: Update FCC Form 498 with SAM.gov Registration and UEI

On August 10, USAC will start using the banking information in SAM.gov to remit E-Rate disbursements. All E-Rate service providers and BEAR filers (applicants using the FCC Form 472 to receive disbursements) must have an active SAM.gov registration including a bank account and must have added their SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) to their FCC Form 498 in EPC to receive disbursements.

Service providers and BEAR filers who have not completed the SAM.gov registration process and added their UEI to EPC can submit invoices, but their payments will be held until these steps are completed.

When submitting E-Rate invoices, please confirm that the FCC Form 498 selected contains your UEI if you have more than one FCC Form 498. USAC recommends deactivating any FCC Forms 498 no longer in use for disbursements. For more information, visit USAC's [SAM.gov UEI Requirement webpage](#).

E-Rate Outreach and Training

USAC is coming to an event near you in 2026. 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

E-Rate experts will provide training, discuss program updates, and answer questions from new and experienced participants. **Registration is still open for these in-person training events.**

Below are events where we can answer your E-Rate questions. You can submit your programmatic questions in advance when you register for a training session.

- **E-Rate Training – Phoenix, AZ: September 15, 2026** at the Salvation Army Kroc Center, 1375 E. Broadway Road, Phoenix, AZ. [Register](#).
- **E-Rate Training – Washington, DC: September 24, 2026** at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) headquarters, 45 L Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. [Register](#). Once you click **Reserve a spot** on the registration page, you will have the option to indicate in-person or virtual attendance.
 - The training will also be available live on the FCC's YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/@FCC> (you won't be able to ask questions if you are tuning in to the webcast, but you can submit questions in advance when you register).

Upcoming Webinars

E-Rate FCC Form 470 and Competitive Bidding August 6, 2026

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

[Register](#)

This webinar provides E-Rate participants with information on how to file the FCC Form 470 and start the E-Rate competitive bidding process. The webinar will cover topics such as planning your project, ensuring an open and fair competitive bidding process, and common errors. It is for all levels of E-Rate experience, and for both applicants and service providers with an emphasis on beginner level participants.

E-Rate Program Overview September 10, 2026

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

[Register](#)

This webinar will provide an overview of the E-Rate application process and explain basic program concepts. We will also highlight recent program changes, including the recent FCC Form 470 updates and managing your Category Two budget. This webinar is intended for program participants of all experience levels and will include a question-and-answer session.

Webinar Recordings

- **E-Rate Invoicing Applicant and Service Provider Webinar** (June 18, 2026). This [webinar](#) was designed to help E-Rate applicants and service providers of varying levels better understand the invoicing process, including the differences between the BEAR and SPI invoicing methods (FCC Form 472 and FCC Form 474). The webinar covered invoice deadlines, filing an invoice, reviews, and more. [Applicants](#) and [service providers](#) were advised to review their respective [eLearning Module courses](#) prior to attending. View [webinar slides](#).
- **Open Data Webinar Part 2: Creating Reports and Visualizations** (June 25, 2026). This follow-up [webinar](#) to the Open Data Overview ([Webinar 1](#)) dove more deeply into using E-Rate data tools. Participants were given tangible examples on how to create custom reports and visuals for an enhanced program experience. View [webinar slides](#).

Conferences

- **Association for Rural and Small Libraries Conference** (Montgomery, Alabama) from **September 16-19, 2026**. [Event link](#).
- **Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums Conference** (ATALM) (Spokane, Washington) from September 21-24, 2026. [Event link](#).

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