



E-Rate

## E-Rate News Brief

**January 28, 2026**

### Funding Year (FY) 2026 FCC Form 471 Filing Window Countdown

The Funding Year (FY) 2026 FCC Form 471 application filing window is currently open. The application filing **window closes on Wednesday, April 1, 2026** at 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time (E.T.). **Submit your application today!**

|                                   |               |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Days to window close</b>       | <b>63</b>     |
| <b>FY2026 FCC Forms 470 filed</b> | <b>14,178</b> |
| <b>FY2026 FCC Forms 471 filed</b> | <b>2,100</b>  |

FCC Forms 470 and 471 counts as of yesterday, 9 p.m. E.T.

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### E-Rate Tips

- **New Category Two (C2) Budget Cycle.** The FCC Form 471 was updated to reflect the FY2026-2030 [Category 2 Budget](#) cycle. The **Entity Details** section on the **Category Two screen** in EPC now shows FY2026-2030 Category Two budget cycle data based on the latest entity profile information entered by applicants during the FY2026 [EPC Administrative Window](#). The FCC Form 471 PDF copy for Category Two applications was updated to reflect this latest entity profile data for student counts (schools/school districts) and square footage (libraries/library systems) for the FY2026-2030 budget cycle. FY2026 is the first year of the C2 budget cycle and all budgets will be verified by USAC if C2 services are requested.

We recommend that you have all information on hand to validate your budget data, which will expedite review of your applications.

- **New BEAR/SPI Selection Added to FY2026 E-Rate FCC Form 471 Application.** The FY2026 FCC Form 471 was updated with a **new required field** below the **Narrative** to collect the invoicing method (applicant invoicing through the FCC Form 472/BEAR or service provider invoicing through the FCC Form 474/SPI) when filing the FCC Form 471 for each funding request. The applicant is permitted to select which method to use on a particular FRN. The [Select an Invoicing Method in E-Rate](#) infographic explains the invoicing methods. See the “E-Rate Program Updates” article in the [December 2025 E-Rate News Brief](#) for more details.
- **FCC Form 471 Training Site Available.** You can practice filling out an FCC Form 471 on USAC’s E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) training site by [requesting a training account](#) for FCC Forms 470 and 471. There are four full-rights profiles available depending on if you are an independent school, independent library, school district, or library system. After we process your request, we will send an email with the appropriate username(s) and password(s) to access the system. You can then use the [Entity Profile Set-Up instructions](#) to set up your profile(s) and practice filling out the form.
- **FCC Form 470 Tools for Service Providers.** Service providers seeking to provide E-Rate equipment and services **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. You can download the form data from the search results as a set of CSV (comma separated value) files. Additional information can be found in the [FCC Form 470 Search User Guide](#). The [E-Rate FCC Form 470 Download Tool](#) also allows service providers to view and export FCC Form 470 data found in EPC for Funding Year 2016 and onwards. You can also download PDF versions of the FCC Form 470 and any Request for Proposal (RFP) attachments.
- **FCC Form 471 Bulk Upload tool.** Applicants with large numbers of eligible services and/or large numbers of recipients of service can prepare FY2026 funding request data by completing the FCC Form 471 [bulk upload templates](#) and then uploading the data to their FCC Form 471.
- **Visit our updated webpages** including [FCC Form 500](#), [Step 5: Starting Services](#), [FCC Form 472 \(BEAR Form\)](#), [How to File FCC Form 472 in EPC](#), and [Service Provider Electronic Notifications](#).

## Funding Year (FY) 2025 Commitments

**FY2025.** USAC released FY2025 Wave 38 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on January 22. As of January 27, FY2025 commitments total over \$2.54 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.

## Preparing for the Funding Year (FY) 2026 Application Filing Window

The FCC Form 471 application filing window **opened Wednesday, January 21, 2026**, and **will close Wednesday, April 1, 2026** at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (E.T.).

**Wednesday, March 4, 2026** is the **last date that you can submit and certify an FCC Form 470** for FY2026 **and still have time to wait the required minimum [28-day period](#)** before submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471 before the filing window closes on April 1.

The FCC Forms 470 and 471 must be filed in [EPC](#). The dates and times above apply to the time the form is certified in EPC. If you complete all the required information on the FCC Form 471 before the filing deadline but certify it after the deadline, the form will not be considered as timely filed.

Below are the next steps for applicants who have not accessed EPC in the last six months; applicants who are ready to start the competitive bidding process; and applicants who have completed their competitive bidding process and signed a contract.

### **Applicants who have not accessed EPC.**

In 2021, we added an additional step to the login process. To access EPC, you must first log in to One Portal, our multi-factor authentication (MFA) system. MFA is a method of authenticating a computer user during the login process by requiring the user to enter two or more separate pieces of information, such as a password known to the user and a code we generate and send to the user by email or text.

Existing EPC users can click the blue **Sign In** button at the top of any [USAC](#) page and follow the instructions. To see a demonstration of the login process, you can watch the [Forgot Password](#) video. (The process of logging in for the first time and the process of resetting your existing password are essentially the same.)

Newly created EPC users will automatically be set up with a One Portal account using their email address as their username. As above, click the blue **Sign In** button to get started. If you need assistance, call our Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100.

### **Applicants who are just starting the application process for FY2026.**

Applicants begin the process of applying for discounts on eligible equipment and services by completing and certifying an [FCC Form 470](#) (*Description of Services Requested and Certification Form*) in EPC. This [opens the competitive bidding process](#), the process by which applicants identify and request the products and services needed so that potential service providers can review those requests and submit bids for them. View the [Competitive Bidding Infographic](#) to learn about key process steps.

The entity that will conduct the competitive bidding process must be prepared to receive and evaluate bids and negotiate with service providers.

You do not have to file an FCC Form 470 for FY2026 if:

- You will be purchasing services from a state master contract where your state filed an FCC Form 470 and conducted a competitive bidding process, and that resulting state master contract covers the equipment and services for all of FY2026 (i.e., July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027); or
- You posted an FCC Form 470 for a previous funding year and conducted a competitive bidding process that resulted in a multi-year contract that covers your equipment and services for all of FY2026; or

- You are purchasing a commercially available, high-speed business-class Internet service that meets ALL of the requirements listed in the **Exemption from Filing an FCC Form 470** section of the [Applicant Step 1: Competitive Bidding](#) guidance document on the USAC website; or
- You are a library purchasing \$3,600 or less in total Category Two equipment in FY2026.

Remember that you must wait at least 28 days after you submit and certify your FCC Form 470 before you can evaluate bids, select a service provider, sign a contract, and submit and certify your FCC Form 471.

### **Applicants who have completed their competitive bidding process and signed a contract.**

If you are using a new or existing contract on your 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 term and associated dates – so that the contract information can be auto-populated from your profile to the appropriate funding request on your FCC Form 471.

You can create contract records in your EPC profile by going to the organization page for the parent organization (independent school, school district, independent library, library system, or consortium) and clicking **Contracts** from the menu choices at the top of the page, then choose **Manage Contracts**, and then choose **Add a New Contract**. For more information, please see [How to Create a Contract Record](#) on E-Rate's video webpage.

- 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 that contract.
  - For a contract that has been voluntarily extended through FY2026, you can include 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. In addition, FCC document retention rules require you to retain and provide documentation upon request for at least 10 years after the end of the applicable funding year or last date of service, whichever date is later.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they **had a contract or other legally binding agreement in place at the time they submitted and certified an FCC Form 471**. Find more information on the [Contracts](#) page or view the [How to Create a Contract Record](#) video.

### **Upcoming E-Rate Application Filing Window Webinars**

During the FY2026 FCC Form 471 application filing window, USAC will conduct webinars focused on E-Rate topics. Below is the schedule of upcoming webinars with the topic, the time, and the recommended audience. We also list the specific materials that attendees should review in advance of the Question and Answer (Q&A) webinars.

If you are interested in attending, register for the webinar you want to attend, and review all

materials referenced below for the webinar in advance of the Q&A session. Below are some upcoming webinars.

### Upcoming Webinars

- **E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process Question & Answer (Q&A) Session**  
**Thursday, February 19, 2026** from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T. [Register](#).

E-Rate subject matter experts will answer questions about the competitive bidding process, Category Two budgets, and the Eligible Services List. This is recommended for applicants and service providers of all E-Rate experience levels. Materials to review before the session include:

- [E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process Webinar](#)
- [Filing the FCC Form 470 and the Competitive Bidding Process Webinar](#)
- [FCC Form 470 Services Guiding Statements Table \(FY2025-2026\)](#)

### Recent Webinars

Below are on-demand recordings and accompanying slides from our recent webinars. Additional sessions are available on the [Webinars](#) page.

- **E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process** (January 22, 2026). This [webinar](#) discussed the E-Rate Pre-Commitment process. This includes how to get started, competitive bidding, applying for funding, and Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review. This webinar is intended for program participants of all levels and will include a question-and-answer session. View [webinar slides](#).

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