Universal Service Administrative Co.	**E-Rate**

E-Rate News Brief

February 19, 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!**

Days to window close	**41**
FY2026 FCC Forms 470 filed	**18,287**
FY2026 FCC Forms 471 filed	**7,851**

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

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E-Rate Tips

- **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 selecting a service provider and filing your FCC Form 471 before the application filing window closes on April 1. Go to the Competitive Bidding Infographic to learn about the steps in the

competitive bidding process. View the How to File an FCC Form 470 learning module or the How to File the FCC Form 471 learning module, which guide users through all aspects of preparing, submitting, and certifying your forms.

- **Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC)**. Due to the recent BMIC change in the 2026 Eligible Services List, applicants may file for certain services previously classified as BMIC under FCC Forms 470 for **Internal Connections (IC)**. However, users may notice that the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) does not allow them to select a BMIC-only FCC Form 470 on a Category Two (C2) FCC Form 471 for IC. USAC **will release a fix today** (February 19, 2026 at 9 p.m.) that will resolve this issue. Applicants that already have a draft FCC Form 471 can continue to work on the draft they started. After the deployment, applicants will be able to return to their FCC Form 471 draft, select the proper FCC Form 470, and resume drafting the form. If you have already submitted an FCC Form 471 and want to change the FCC Form 470 you cited, submit a **Receipt Acknowledgement Letter (RAL) Modification Request** (see article below) to inform us of the change.

- **Application Assistance for Tribal Libraries**. Do you know a Tribal library that is not currently participating in E-Rate? Please consider sharing the Find Your Library Discount Guide, which can help libraries and other entity types look up the benefits they may receive through the E-Rate program, and information about getting started. Tribal libraries can also sign up for the Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program (T-LEAP) and receive one-to-one assistance on all phases of applying for and receiving E-Rate funding.

- **SAM.gov Requirement for E-Rate Invoicing**. **Beginning August 2026**, USAC will begin using SAM.gov banking information to remit payment for all Universal Service Fund (USF) requests for reimbursement. All E-Rate service providers and E-Rate applicants who use the FCC Form 472/BEAR invoicing method, **must have a Unique Entity Identifier** (UEI) on their FCC Form 498 **and register for an active SAM.gov account.** You must have a valid bank account associated with your SAM.gov account. If you don't already have a UEI or an active SAM.gov account, begin the process early because **it can take six to eight weeks to verify the UEI and the SAM.gov account**. For more information, see the SAM.gov Entity Registration webpage or the USAC SAM.gov UEI Requirement webpage. Please also note that you must renew your SAM.gov account on an annual basis. You will not be able to receive USF reimbursements if your SAM.gov account is inactive once the transition to SAM.gov for banking information goes live. As a reminder, USAC will also stop using and collecting banking information on the FCC Form 498 as part of this transition.

- **Unresponsive Bids, "SPAM" Bids and "Robobids."** All bids received, including "SPAM bids" or "robobids," must be retained during the competitive bidding process. Disqualification factors can be applied to bids received that do not meet minimum bid requirements, do not include site- or project-specific details, and/or are not responsive to the applicant's requests. Applicants may include language in their FCC Form 470 narrative or request for proposal (RFP), such as, "SPAM and/or robotic responses will not be considered valid bid responses and will be disqualified from consideration." By doing this, applicants can disqualify bids based on this factor and not be required to evaluate the disqualified bids. The decision to disqualify any non-responsive bids should also be memorialized and retained to demonstrate compliance with the E-Rate competitive bidding rules.

- **Open Data Security Updates**. USAC has updated security for its E-Rate Open Data connections for viewing and downloading form PDFs and request for proposal documents from the E-Rate FCC Form 471 Download Tool, E-Rate FCC Form 470 Download Tool, and underlying datasets. Bookmarked links will remain functional.

- **Visit our updated webpages** including Obtain an Applicant 498 ID, Invoice Check, and FCC Form 471 Filing.

Funding Year (FY) 2025 Commitments

FY2025. USAC released FY2025 Wave 41 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on February 12. As of February 18, FY2025 commitments total over $2.56 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.

Upcoming February 25, 2026 Invoicing Deadline for FY2024 Recurring Services

Wednesday, February 25, 2026 is the deadline to submit invoices for FY2024 recurring services, if the applicant or service provider requested and received an invoice deadline extension of the original October 28, 2025, invoice deadline. Applicants and service providers must submit and certify their requests for reimbursement by this date, as USAC cannot grant a second invoice deadline extension. Parties requesting a waiver must submit their waiver request to the FCC and demonstrate extraordinary circumstances to justify a waiver of the invoice filing deadline rule.

Requesting an invoice filing deadline extension
If your invoice deadline date (IDD) has not passed, and you have not already requested and received a 120-day extension, you can request an extension of the invoicing deadline if you need more time to complete invoicing for your funding request numbers (FRNs). If the extension request is received before your IDD and approved, you will receive an additional 120 days to complete your invoicing process. USAC cannot approve a second extension if you requested and received a 120-day extension before.

All requests for reimbursement and invoice filing deadline extension requests must be submitted on or before your invoice filing deadline date. If you do not know your invoice filing deadline date, the E-Rate FRN Invoice Deadline Tool provides the ability to search, view, and download data related to FRN(s) and the applicable invoice filing deadline date(s).

Reminders for Filing an FY2026 FCC Form 471

Below are reminders for some of the actions you should take **before the FY2026 application filing window closes on April 1, 2026**.

Wait the required, minimum 28-day period before selecting your service provider(s), and before submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471.
You must wait the required, minimum 28-day period after your FCC Form 470 is certified and posted before choosing a service provider, or signing a contract (if applicable) before submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471. **The earliest date** you can enter into a contract **is listed on your FCC Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter (RNL)** in your EPC **News** feed **as the**

"Allowable Contract Date." Changes to the FCC Form 470 beyond certain [allowable changes](#) require applicants to restart the minimum 28-day waiting period from the date of the change before selecting a service provider, signing a contract, or submitting and certifying an FCC Form 471. View the [Competitive Bidding Infographic](#) to review the competitive bidding process steps.

Additionally, if you make any substantial changes to your uploaded RFP (request for proposals) or RFP documents after you certified and submitted your FCC Form 470, you are required to wait a minimum 28-day period from the date you uploaded your updated RFP or RFP documents. The required, minimum 28-day waiting period is based on the date of your certified and posted FCC Form 470 or uploaded RFP, whichever was filed later, if they are not posted together on the same date.

- EPC will not allow you to create a contract record if the FCC Form 470 you try to cite for the contract was not posted for at least 28 days.

- Once the minimum 28-day waiting period has ended and a service provider is selected, the applicant must have a contract or other legally binding agreement prior to the submission of the FCC Form 471. Note that a verbal agreement is not considered a contract or legally [binding agreement](#) under E-Rate program rules.

- For services provided under tariff or on a month-to-month basis, EPC will not allow you to finish entering a funding request for those services if the cited FCC Form 470 was not posted for at least 28 days.

Make sure that you have access rights in EPC to be able to work on an FCC Form 471. Your Account Administrator must grant you user rights to complete and/or certify the FCC Form 471. Note that new users must first accept the terms and conditions for EPC by clicking the **Tasks** tab from the menu at the top of the landing page and choosing the appropriate task.

After your rights have been assigned, click the **FCC Form 471** link at the top of your organization's landing page to start your form.

If you have access to the form but cannot enter information or take other actions, call the Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100 for assistance.

Start your FCC Form 471, even if you are not ready to provide all funding request details.
After you start your form, you can see your progress through the form by referring to the progress bar at the top of each page. If you need to stop before you have finished, the system will create a task for you under the **Tasks** tab to allow you to resume your work at the point you left. Be sure to review the following as you work through your form:

- Your organization's information (e.g., name, address, telephone number, attributes).

- Your related entities' information (e.g., name, address, urban/rural status, attributes, student counts for schools, library square footage, and library main branch designation for libraries).

- Your organization's urban/rural designation and discount calculation.

Because entity profiles are locked, you will not be able to make any entity changes at this point. However, by making a note of any necessary updates, you will be ready to submit a **RAL Modification Request** (see [article below](#)) to inform us of those updates.

Create a contract record for each new contract or legally binding agreement.
You must have a contract record in your profile for each contract or legally binding agreement you intend to use on your FY2026 FCC Form 471. You then cite the contract record for the services that will be provided under that contract when you are creating a funding request on your form.

- If you created a contract record in an earlier year for a multi-year contract that covers your services for FY2026, cite to that contract record for this year.

- If you created a contract record in an earlier year for a contract with voluntary extensions, you do not need to create a new contract record if the extension will cover services for all of FY2026. First, work with your service provider to exercise the extension for your FY2026 services. Then, when you cite to that contract record for the funding request for these services, enter the last date of service for all of FY2026 (e.g., June 30, 2027) in the contract end date field for that request. You do not have to create a new contract record simply because you exercised an option to extend the contract.

- Learn How to Create a Contract Record:

    o [How to Create a Contract Record](#) video.

    o [How to Create a Contract Record for Commercially Available Broadband/Low-Cost High-Speed Internet Access](#) (which is exempt from competitive bidding) video.

You are encouraged – but not required – to upload a copy of your contract into your contract record in EPC. 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.

Do not wait until the end of the application filing window to contact us with questions or issues.
You can open a customer service case in EPC or call CSC at (888) 203-8100 if you need assistance. If you choose to open a customer service case, you will also be able to upload one or more documents that provide additional information we need to process your request.

Interim SPIN Will Be Available March 18, 2026 for FY2026 FCC Form 471 Submissions

Service providers who are new to the E-Rate program may have applied for, but not yet received, a [Service Provider Identification Number](#) (SPIN). Applicants, whose service providers have multiple SPINs or are undergoing a merger or acquisition, may not be sure which SPIN to include on an FCC Form 471 funding request.

In such cases, USAC enables an "interim SPIN" (143666666) shortly before the close of the FCC Form 471 application filing window. **The interim SPIN will be available starting March 18, 2026**. However, we encourage applicants to provide the correct SPIN for their FCC Form 471 funding requests, whenever possible, to speed USAC's review of their application.

Applicants can file an FCC Form 471 application and use this interim SPIN as a placeholder so they can timely file their form during the application filing window. They can then **update the SPIN through a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) Modification Request** (see [article below](#)) or during the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review of their application.

Use the RAL Modification Request to Update Certified FCC Form 471 Information

USAC issues an FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) to both the applicant and service provider(s) in EPC after an FCC Form 471 application is certified. The letter contains many of the details submitted on the FCC Form 471 and provides a means to correct any errors or

mistakes. If you were not able to make all the appropriate updates to your profile in EPC before the close of the EPC FCC Form 471 administrative window, **you can provide updated profile information by filing a RAL Modification Request** after submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471 application(s), but before you receive funding commitment decision letter(s).

Applicants receive the RAL in their EPC **News** feed after 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, you can also view the FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter Modification Guide.

E-Rate Outreach and Training

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.

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.

In this Q&A session, E-Rate subject matter experts will answer questions about the competitive bidding process, Category Two budgets, and the Eligible Services List. Applicants and service providers of all E-Rate experience levels should review the materials below before the session and prepare their questions.

- o E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process Webinar

- o Filing the FCC Form 470 and the Competitive Bidding Process Webinar

- o FCC Form 470 Services Guiding Statements Table (FY2025-2026)

Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) Review Process Webinar
March 26, 2026 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T. Register.

This webinar will provide 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, and funding commitment decision letters (FCDL).

Service Provider Webinar
March 31, 2026 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T. Register.

This webinar is for Service Providers who are new to the E-Rate program. After attending this webinar, you will be able to: accurately describe what E-Rate is and the different steps of the E-Rate process, obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN), bid on projects, assist the applicant/beneficiary, certify compliance, and invoice USAC. Before attending this webinar, please review the E-Rate Program Overview webinar for a deeper understanding of the program.

In-Person Training
USAC is coming to an event near you in 2026. E-Rate experts will provide training, discuss program updates, and answer questions from new and experienced participants. **USAC will announce when registration for these two in-person training events will open in a future news brief. Save these dates**.

Below are events that we will attend where we can answer your E-Rate questions.

- **E-Rate Training – Phoenix**: **September 15, 2026**

- **E-Rate Training – Washington, DC**: **September 24, 2026**

Conferences

- **Computers in Libraries Conference 2026: March 17-19, 2026** in Arlington, Virginia. [Event Link](#).

- **Public Libraries Association (PLA) 2026 Conference: April 1-3, 2026** in Minneapolis, Minnesota. [Event Link](#).

- **Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) 2026 Conference: April 13-15, 2026** in Chicago. [Event Link](#).