



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

E-Rate

E-Rate News Brief

March 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 | 13 |
| FY2026 FCC Forms 470 filed | 22,663 |
| FY2026 FCC Forms 471 filed | 19,500 |

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

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E-Rate Tips

- **The interim SPIN became available March 18, 2026.** If you don't know your service provider's SPIN (Service Provider Identification Number) or the provider has multiple SPINs and you don't know which to use, you can enter the

interim SPIN (143666666) on your FY2026 FCC Form 471 application funding requests. See the [February 2026 E-Rate News Brief](#) for more information.

- **FY2026 Application Filing Window Waiver Requests.** If you need to request a waiver of the FY2026 application filing window deadline (i.e., after April 1, 2026), be sure to certify and submit your FCC Form 471 in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) before you file your waiver request with the FCC. You will receive an out-of-window status notification after you certify your form. If the waiver request is granted, the FCC Form 471 will be treated as timely filed during the filing window. See the [E-Rate Appeals Waiver Guide](#) to learn more.
- **Review the FCC Form 471 learning module.** USAC created a learning module for [How to File the FCC Form 471](#), which guides users through all aspects of preparing, submitting, and certifying your form. Topics include how to submit Category One (C1) and Category Two (C2) funding requests, funding requests for data transmission, fiber, and special construction under C1, and internal connections, basic maintenance of internal connections, and managed internal broadband services under C2.
- **How to Categorize Right-to-Use and Support Licenses.** Both right-to-use licenses – traditionally classified as Internal Connections (IC) – and support licenses (newly classified under IC) can be considered as non-recurring services or recurring services depending on the supporting contract documents and how your vendor bills for the licenses. Support licenses are considered non-recurring services when the supporting documentation reflects fixed (non-recurring) pricing. In contrast, if a vendor’s supporting documentation reflects a support license that is billed as a monthly recurring charge, that is how it should be reflected on the funding request.

Funding Year (FY) 2025 Commitments

FY2025. USAC released FY2025 Wave 45 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on March 12. As of March 18, FY2025 commitments total over \$2.61 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.

Last-Minute Filing Tips for the FCC Form 471 Application Filing Window

In [last month's E-Rate News Brief](#), we provided preparation steps for the FY2026 application filing window and FCC Form 471 tips for first-time filers. Below are additional tips to keep in mind during the last weeks of the FY2026 FCC Form 471 application filing window.

Return to an incomplete FCC Form 471

If you are not finished with a form and you need to exit the form, you can click the **SAVE & CONTINUE** button to save your work on the current page and then exit the browser. EPC will create a task for you in the **My Tasks** list located in the **Tasks** tab on your landing page, that you can use to return to the unfinished form and complete your data entry. If EPC unexpectedly times you out of the system, EPC will also create a task for you to use to return to your form.

We strongly encourage you **not to use the SAVE AND SHARE button that appears at the bottom of the entry screens of your form**. This button will create and send a task to everyone in your organization with authorization, to continue working on the form **except you**.

If you have provided all required information but you are not a full-rights user, you can click the **SEND FOR CERTIFICATION** button in EPC after you review the PDF version of your form to create a task for all full-rights users to be able to access, review, and certify the form.

Certify your FCC Form 471

You can certify the FCC Form 471 if you are a full-rights user for this form. Check with your Account Administrator if you believe you should have these rights but are not able to certify your form.

Remember that sending a form to full-rights users in your organization for certification will mean that you will no longer have access to revise the form. You can review the information you provided on a PDF version of the form before you send it for certification, and full-rights users must review that PDF version before they can proceed to certification.

Correct information on the FCC Form 471 after it is certified

After the FCC Form 471 has been certified, **use a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) modification request** to make corrections on the form. This includes corrections to the entity profile information and any other information on the form. You may also add or remove funding requests via a RAL modification request. Note that your PIA reviewer may have questions about the reasons for the changes you request. To learn how to submit modification requests for your FCC Form(s) 471, view the [FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter Modification Guide](#).

Guidance on Advance Installation of Non-Recurring Services

In certain situations, non-recurring services may be installed before FY2026 begins on July 1, 2026. Program rules permit applicants to request E-Rate program discounts for Category One non-recurring charges incurred up to six months prior to the July 1 start of the funding year (i.e., on or after January 1) if the following conditions are met: construction begins after selection of a service provider pursuant to a valid competitive bidding process; a Category One recurring service depends on the installation of the infrastructure; the service start date is on or after the start of the funding year; and no invoices (FCC Forms 472 or 474) are dated prior to July 1 of the funding year.

Installation of Category Two non-recurring services may begin as early as April 1 prior to the July 1 start of the funding year. Applicants are permitted to place an order for E-Rate Category Two eligible equipment (included on their FY2026 application) prior to April 1, 2026, provided that the equipment is not delivered to the applicant before April 1, 2026. No invoices (FCC Forms 472 or 474) can be certified prior to July 1 of the funding year.

Guidance on Competitive Bidding and the Minimum 28-Day Waiting Period

March 4, 2026 was the last day to certify and submit your FY2026 FCC Form 470, wait the required minimum 28-day period, and timely certify and submit your FY2026 FCC Form 471 before the application filing window **closes on April 1, 2026**, at 11:59 p.m. E.T.

For applicants who have not yet certified and submitted their FCC Form 470, you may still take the following steps:

1. Certify and submit your FCC Form 470 for FY2026 as soon as you are ready. Be sure to upload any request for proposal (RFP) documents you have to your form. We suggest that you review the [FCC Form 470 Filing](#) webpage for more information.

2. Wait at least 28 days before you choose a service provider, sign a contract, and submit and certify your FCC Form 471. If you are required to wait more than 28 days due to your state or local procurement rules or regulations, or competitive bidding requirements, be sure to follow those requirements. As a reminder, follow all competitive bidding requirements and wait the required 28-day minimum period before awarding a contract. The [FCC Form 470/Competitive Bidding infographic](#) contains reminders to help ensure your success in the E-Rate program. Additional resources include [Competitive Bidding FAQs](#), [28-Day Waiting Period](#), and the [E-Rate Document Retention](#) page.
3. **Certify and submit** your FCC Form 471. You will receive a notification that your form is in out-of-window status.
4. Request a waiver of the FCC Form 471 application filing window deadline with the FCC, providing details of the circumstances that led to your late filing. You can refer to the **Submitting Window Waiver Requests** section of the [FCC Form 471 Filing](#) page on the USAC website or the [E-Rate Appeals Waiver Guide](#) to learn more about how to file a waiver request.

If the FCC approves your waiver request, USAC will move your FCC Form 471 to an in-window status and add it to the queue for Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review. If the FCC denies your waiver request, your FY2026 FCC Form 471 application will not be reviewed or processed by USAC.

Extended CSC Hours for Final Days of the Application Filing Window

The E-Rate Customer Service Center (CSC) will be open extended hours before the April 1, 2026 deadline for the close of the FY2026 FCC Form 471 application filing window to help applicants with last-minute questions and any issues. Call CSC at (888) 203-8100 for assistance.

Below are CSC's extended hours beginning Saturday, March 28, through Wednesday, April 1 (all times are Eastern Time (E.T.)):

- Saturday, March 28 – 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sunday, March 29 – 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Monday, March 30 – 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 31 – 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 1 – 8 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.

What You Need to Know About SAM.GOV Registration

Beginning August 2026, USAC will use SAM.gov banking information to pay all Universal Service Fund invoices. To continue receiving USF disbursements, all service providers and E-Rate participants who use the FCC Form 472/BEAR for invoicing **must have an active SAM.gov account, an Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)** on their FCC Form 498, and must have a valid bank account associated with their SAM.gov account. Note that the taxpayer identification number (TIN) associated with the UEI in SAM.gov must match the TIN on your FCC Form 498. Please also note that E-Rate participants who use FCC Form 472 or 474 invoices must annually renew their SAM.gov account to be able to receive USF disbursements from USAC. If the SAM.gov account is inactive, USAC will not be able to disburse funding to the account.

How do I update the FCC Form 498 to include the UEI? (for Service providers, in E-File)

You must be an FCC Form 498 Company Officer to modify the form:

- Log in to [E-File](#).
- Click **Service Provider** and then **Manage FCC Forms 498**.
- Under the **Action** column, click **Edit**.
- Click **File a revision to existing FCC Form 498 information**
- In the section named "Company and General Contact Information," click **Edit**.
- Scroll to the bottom of the page and find the section called "Federal FEIN, DUNS, FCC Registration Number (CORES ID), and SAM.gov UEI".
- Enter your UEI and click **Verify** above the section title. A green check mark will appear.
- Click **Save & Return to Summary** to review and certify your form.
- Once certified, you will see a confirmation screen. All done!

In E-File, when you add your UEI to your FCC Form 498, you will receive an error message if it is associated with the wrong TIN. If the UEI is associated with the correct TIN, you will get a green check mark after you click **Verify**.

For step-by-step instructions, watch the [Update SAM.gov Unique Entity ID on FCC Form 498](#) video.

How do I update the FCC Form 498 to include the UEI? (for E-Rate applicants, in EPC)

You must have School or Library Official user permissions to modify the form:

- Log in to [EPC](#).
- Click the **Records** tab at the top of the page.
- Choose **FCC Form 498** from the list of entries.
- Click on the nickname or 498 ID of the form you want to modify.
- Click **Related Actions** at the top of the page, then click **Modify FCC Form 498**.
- Navigate to the "Organization Numbers" page of the form, enter the UEI, and click **Verify** to receive a green check mark.
- Continue to click **Save and Continue** on subsequent pages until you have submitted your form.
- Re-certify your form. Until the form has been re-certified, the form will display the status "In Progress."

Helpful Tips: The typical processing time for changes to the FCC Form 498 is 2-3 business days. If your form has been in review for more than 3 business days, please contact our Finance team at (888) 641-8722 for further assistance.

E-Rate Outreach and Training

During 2026, 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

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 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, AZ: September 15, 2026** at the Salvation Army Kroc Center, 1375 E. Broadway Road, Phoenix, AZ 85040.
- **E-Rate Training – Washington, DC: September 24, 2026** at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) headquarters, 45 L Street, N.E., Washington, D.C.

Conferences

- **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](#).

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USAC | 700 12th Street NW | Suite 900 | Washington, DC 20005