



E-Rate News Brief

June 18, 2026

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E-Rate Tips

- **E-Rate Program Audits.** USAC has several resources that can help you navigate the audit process if you get selected for an audit. The [Common Audit Findings: E-Rate Program](#) page provides a list of some of the most common problem areas identified during [Beneficiary and Contributor Audit Program](#) (BCAP) audits and [Payment Quality Assurance](#) (PQA) reviews. View the E-Rate [BCAP documentation list](#) and the [PQA documentation list](#) to see the types of documents you will need to provide should you be selected for an audit.
- **New FCC Form 498 UEI Data Tools.** Beginning August 2026, USAC will use SAM.gov banking information to pay all Universal Service Fund invoices and will stop using existing banking information from the FCC Form 498. To receive USF disbursements, **you must have an active SAM.gov account, a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) on an approved FCC Form 498, and a valid bank account associated with your SAM.gov account.** USAC has created two tools to help you check your 498 UEI status. The [USAC Service Provider 498 UEI Confirmation Tool](#) shows whether a service provider has a UEI (yes or no) on its last approved FCC

Form 498. The [E-Rate Applicant 498 UEI Confirmation Tool](#) is for applicants that file an FCC Form 472 for E-Rate disbursements to check their 498 UEI status.

- **FY2026 Invoicing Begins on July 1.** After USAC has committed funding and processed your FY2026 [FCC Form 486](#), you or your service provider can begin invoicing USAC for the discounted share of the costs for the approved eligible equipment and services. Service provider(s) **must have a FY2026 FCC Form 473 (SPAC) on file** before any invoices can be processed or funding disbursed (see the FCC Form 473 [article below](#)). [Register](#) for **today's E-Rate Service Providers Webinar** to learn more about the FCC Form 473 annual certification, the invoicing process, and key reminders.
- **Reminder:** The **Summer Deferral period**, which applies to USAC's processing of program forms and requests, **started Friday, May 22, 2026, and ends on Friday, September 11, 2026**. If our first attempt to contact you about a program form or request is on or after May 22, and we do not receive a response to our questions, we will put your application or request on a deferred status and will resume review after September 11. You can contact your reviewer or respond to our pending questions at any time to restart the review, or you can designate someone to answer questions in your absence.
- **Visit our updated webpages** including [Glossary of Terms](#), [Step 6: Applicant Invoicing](#), [Step 5: Invoice USAC](#) (service providers), [Invoice Deadline Extensions](#), and [28-Day Waiting Period](#).

Funding Year (FY) 2026 Commitments

FY2026. USAC released FY2026 Wave 7 on June 11. As of June 17, FY2026 commitments total over \$1.18 billion.

On the date that Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDL) 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.

Program Changes Effective June 18, 2026

On April 30, 2026, the FCC adopted a Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration ([FCC 26-30](#)) to strengthen E-Rate program integrity by creating a competitive bidding portal, streamlining program rules, and clarifying rules for transitioning services, cost allocations, and competitive bidding. In future funding years, it also eliminates the FCC Form 486 (Receipt of Service Confirmation and Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Certification Form) and moves that form's CIPA certifications to the FCC Form 471. The following changes are effective as of today.

Invoice Filing Deadline. The FCC eased certain restrictions around the invoice filing deadline including allowing applicants and service providers to **request a single 120-day extension** of the original invoice filing deadline from USAC **if the request is made before or within 15 days of the original invoice filing deadline.**

For example, the invoice filing deadline for recurring services in FY2025 is Wednesday, October 28, 2026. If an applicant or service provider failed to file its request for reimbursement or

request an extension by that time, it could seek an extension until Thursday, November 12, 2026 (15 days after October 28). That would extend the invoice filing deadline to Thursday, February 25, 2027, which is 120 days after the original invoice filing deadline of October 28, 2026.

Beginning on June 18, 2026, you can request a one-time invoice deadline extension by opening a Customer Service Case in EPC **before or within 15 days of the original Invoice Deadline Date (IDD)** and providing the applicable Funding Request Numbers (FRNs). Once the extension is granted, the FRN(s) will be updated to reflect the new invoice deadline date. The customer service case will be updated with the new IDD, and the case will be closed. **Note:** This interim process **will remain in place until an EPC system enhancement is available** to facilitate these requests directly. USAC will let program participants know when this system enhancement will be available in an upcoming news brief.

The FCC also provided for a **one-time, 60-day grace period** for applicants and service providers **to submit new, corrected versions of invoices** that were timely filed before the invoice filing deadline but rejected by USAC on or after the invoicing deadline. The 60-day period to resubmit a corrected invoice automatically starts the day you get a USAC decision denying or reducing your reimbursement request. If your second submission is rejected, you may file a USAC appeal within 60 days of that decision.

Cost Allocations. For **cost allocations**, the FCC clarified that the ancillary use presumption explained in [FCC 23-56](#) applies to all Category One (C1) services including data transmission services, wide area network services, ethernet, etc. That is, if at least 90% of an applicant's requested recurring C1 service will be used for an eligible purpose during the funding year, the remaining ineligible use of the C1 service at eligible locations will be presumed to be ancillary and cost allocation is not required. USAC procedures have been updated to ensure this presumption is applied to all C1 services.

Selective Review Overview

Each year, some applicants are chosen to undergo a selective review as part of USAC's review of their FCC Form 471. Selective review is a separate component of the E-Rate program integrity assurance (PIA) review process and can run concurrently with a PIA review. In general, selective reviews are used to verify that the applicant has complied with FCC rules, including, but not limited to, the competitive bidding and the necessary resources requirements.

Selective reviews take place **at the billed entity level**. If you as the billed entity are chosen for a selective review, we will review all the FCC Forms 471 that you certified for the funding year. For a detailed look at this process, please visit the [Selective Review](#) webpage on the E-Rate website.

Request a Service Delivery Deadline Extension for Special Construction by June 30, 2026

To be eligible for E-Rate program discounts for special construction charges, **special construction must be completed in time for the fiber to be lit or to be in use by the end of the relevant funding year** (i.e., June 30, 2026 for FY2025). This deadline applies to leased lit fiber, leased dark fiber, or a self-provisioned network involving another technology. If the June 30 deadline is not met and you have not requested and received an extension, your special construction charges will not be eligible for support under program rules, and you will need to seek a waiver of the rule from the FCC.

If you sought support for special construction related to leased lit fiber, leased dark fiber, or self-provisioned networks for FY2025, **you may request a one-year extension** of the June 30 deadline **by demonstrating that construction was unavoidably delayed** due to weather or other reasons, **or by the late issuance of an FCDL**. You must demonstrate that the reason or reasons have unavoidably delayed special construction in a manner that prevents the fiber from being lit, or a self-provisioned network using another technology from being implemented, in time to be in use by the June 30 deadline.

Applicants must file an [FCC Form 500](#) by June 30, 2026 to request this one-year extension. Go to [FAQS: Eligible Fiber Services](#) for additional information regarding deadlines and extensions in relation to non-recurring special construction charges.

If you have not yet received your FCDL and you need to request an extension of this deadline, **file a customer service case in EPC** and attach a completed [Special Construction Deadline Extension Request](#) (SCDER) to the case **on or before June 30, 2026**. Be sure to specify the funding year for your FRN(s) (spreadsheet defaults to FY2022 so be sure to update the funding year).

If you need assistance, you can open a customer service case in EPC or call the Customer Service Center at (888) 203-8100, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. E.T.

Service Providers: File the FCC Form 473 (SPAC) Annual Certification Form

Service providers file an FCC Form 473, also known as the Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form, to certify their compliance with E-Rate program rules. Service providers **must complete a SPAC form for each Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) and for every funding year** they participate in the E-Rate program. This form is required so that service providers certify their compliance with the FCC rules annually, and to allow the invoicing process to begin.

The SPAC form **is now located in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC)**. If you do not see the link to file the SPAC, you may have **View Only** permissions. Only the Account Administrator can manage user permissions for users associated with a service provider in EPC. Please contact your Account Administrator to update your permissions, if needed. Only users with **Full Rights** permissions can complete the SPAC and submit it for certification in EPC. **Partial Rights** users can enter data on the SPAC but cannot certify and submit it in EPC. You can go to **Module 2: File an FCC Form 473** of the [Service Provider Course 1: Submitting and Certifying Invoices in EPC](#) learning module to learn how to submit the annual FCC Form 473.

Applicants can check the status of their existing service provider's current FCC Form 473/SPAC Form by searching for their funding request numbers (FRNs) for any year in the [E-Rate FRN Status Tool FY2016+](#) and looking in the "**SPAC Filed?**" column. In EPC, service providers can click on their SPIN and check the **FCC Form 473/SPAC Filed** field to see for which funding years they have already submitted a SPAC(s).

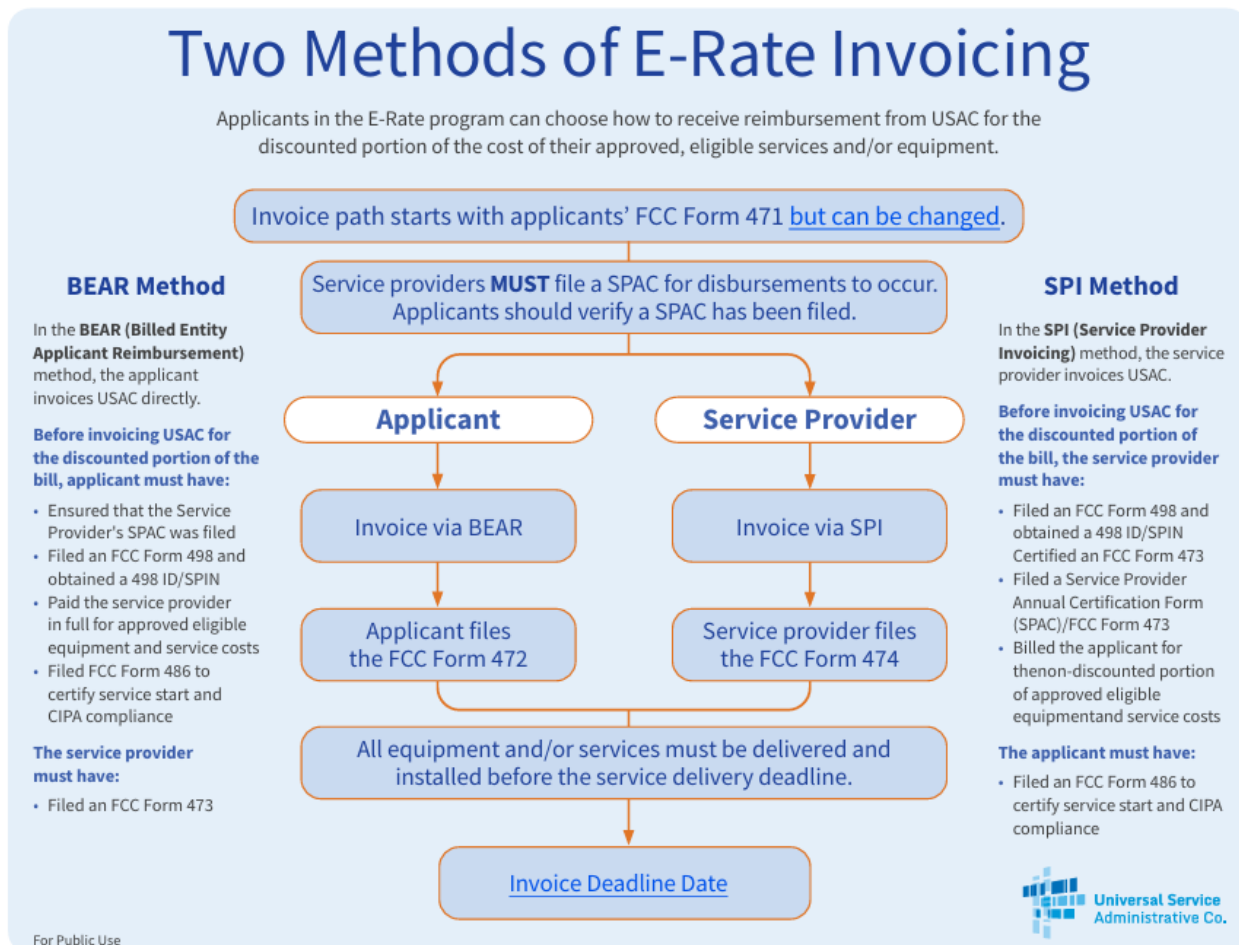
Applicants can also check potential and existing service providers' FCC Form 473/SPAC Form filing history using the [E-Rate Service Provider Download Tool](#) and checking the **FCC Form 473 SPAC Filed** column. Applicants can include filing an annual SPAC form as a competitive bidding requirement on their FCC Form 470 or in a Request for Proposals (RFP) document, and can use the requirement as a bid evaluation factor during their E-Rate vendor selection process.

Get Ready for FY2026 Invoicing

After USAC has committed funding and processed your [FCC Form 486](#) (Receipt of Service Confirmation and Children’s Internet Protection Act Certification Form), you or your service provider can begin invoicing USAC for the discounted share of the costs of the approved eligible equipment and services (see [Filing the FY2026 FCC Form 486](#) in May's News Brief). USAC can process invoices from either the applicant or the service provider after the following have occurred:

- USAC has issued an FCDL with a positive funding commitment.
- Services have started or the equipment has been delivered. (USAC can process invoices for payments after review of the contract if it includes a specific payment schedule.)
- The applicant submits, and USAC successfully processes, an FCC Form 486.
- The service provider files an [FCC Form 473](#) (SPAC) for the relevant funding year.

There are two methods that can be used to invoice USAC, the Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) method and the Service Provider Invoice (SPI) method (see picture below). Once USAC has processed an invoice for an FRN, that invoicing method must be used for the FRN for the remainder of the invoicing process.



For Public Use



For the SPI invoicing method, USAC reviews the SPI Form and disburses payment to the service provider if payment is approved. The applicant is always [required to pay the non-discounted portion](#) of the costs of the eligible equipment and services within 90 days of receiving services.

There are two options for completing and submitting the SPI Form: Service providers can [file online](#) in EPC, or they can [file electronically](#) (eSPI), which is the format used by service providers who bill USAC frequently and/or submit large numbers of invoice line items at one time. Electronic filing speeds up the USAC invoicing process.

Invoicing Reminders

Below are some reminders to help ensure you submit successful invoices. Please see the [Invoicing Requirements Guide](#) for more details.

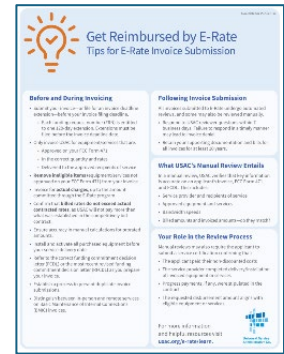
- **Invoice USAC only for FCC Form 471 approved eligible equipment and services**, in the correct quantity and rates, and delivered only to the approved Recipients of Service (ROS).
- Invoiced amount **must be for actual charges**, up to the amount committed through the E-Rate program. **Billed rates must not exceed the contracted rates**. USAC will only pay up to the contracted rate.
- Manual calculations for prorated amounts must be accurate.
- Make sure that **all equipment purchased is installed and in use** before the Service Delivery Date (SDD).
- Establish a process to **prevent duplicate invoice submission**.
- Invoices can be submitted **until the Invoice Filing Deadline**.
- All FRNs can receive a one-time, 120-day invoice deadline extension, even if you do not anticipate needing one, if an extension request is submitted to USAC **before or within 15 days of an FRN's invoice filing deadline**.
- **Remove ineligible items** (i.e., equipment and services not approved on an FCC Form 471 for the funding year and for the correct Recipients of Service).
- **Retain your supporting documentation** and bills for all invoices for at least 10 years after the last day of the applicable funding year or the service delivery deadline, whichever is later.

USAC's website has [video tutorials](#) on how to submit the FCC Form 472 or the FCC Form 474, learning modules ([EPC Invoicing for Applicants](#) and [EPC Invoicing for Service Providers](#)), and webpages for the [FCC Form 472](#) and [FCC Form 474](#) to help you navigate the invoicing process.

USAC also has three infographics to help you successfully submit E-Rate invoices.



- [Select an Invoicing Method in E-Rate](#) explains the differences between the FCC Form 472 and FCC Form 474 invoicing paths.
- [E-Rate Prepare to Invoice](#) provides information on what forms applicants or service providers need to submit, filing deadlines, and EPC user permissions for invoicing.
- [E-Rate Tips for Speeding Up Disbursements](#) provides tips to help you get your disbursements faster, including what to expect before, during, and after invoice submission, the USAC manual review process, and your role in the process.



Don't Wait to Register Your Entity on SAM.gov and Obtain a UEI if You Invoice USAC

Beginning August 2026, USAC will use SAM.gov banking information to pay all Universal Service Fund (USF) invoices. To continue receiving USF disbursements, all service providers who use the FCC Form 474 and all E-Rate applicants who use the FCC Form 472/BEAR for invoicing must have an active SAM.gov account, a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) on their FCC Form 498, and a valid bank account associated with their SAM.gov account.

Service Providers and BEAR Filers Who Believe They Have an Active SAM.gov Account, UEI, and Linked Valid Bank Account should:

- Log into E-File (or EPC for BEAR filers) to confirm that the FCC Form 498 (Block 3, Line 24) includes a UEI.
- Log into SAM.gov to confirm that the UEI is connected to a valid bank account (specifically, the bank account designated to accept USF disbursements), the SAM.gov account is active, and check the annual renewal due date.

After completing these steps, service providers who file SPI Forms and E-Rate applicants who file BEAR Forms, will continue receiving USF disbursements. Please remember, **you have to annually renew** your SAM.gov account. The renewal due date is listed in your account on SAM.gov. You will not be able to receive USF disbursements if your SAM.gov account becomes inactive.

Service Providers and BEAR Filers Who Do Not Think They Have an Active SAM.gov Account, UEI, and Linked Valid Bank Account should:

- Visit SAM.gov and follow the registration process through to completion. Visit the SAM.gov [Learn How to Register Your Entity](#) page to get started.
- Once registered with SAM.gov, you will be automatically assigned a UEI.
- Log into SAM.gov to link the UEI to a valid bank account—specifically, the bank account designated to accept USF disbursements.
- Log in to E-File (or EPC for BEAR filers) to add the UEI to the FCC Form 498 (Block 3, Line 24).

Because the SAM.gov registration process **can take up to six weeks**, USAC recommends starting as soon as possible. For more information, visit USAC's [SAM.gov UEI Requirement webpage](#).

E-Rate Outreach and Training

In-Person Training

USAC has an in-person training event near you in 2026. 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 questions 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 when you register).

E-Rate In-Person Training – Washington, DC
Thursday, September 24 - 9am - 4pm EDT

In-Person Attendee for the Washington, DC Training – 0 +

Free
Sales end on Sep 22, 2026

1 Registration to attend the E-Rate training in Washington, DC on Thursday, September 24, 2026. The name on the registration must match the person attending. [See more](#)

Virtual Attendee for the Washington, DC Training – 1 +

Free
Sales end on Sep 24, 2026

Virtual attendees can join the training online at the FCC's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@FCC>

[Register](#)

Upcoming Webinars

E-Rate Invoicing Webinar

June 18, 2026 (Today) from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T. [Register](#).

- This webinar is designed to help E-Rate applicants and service providers of varying experience 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 will also cover invoice deadlines, filing an invoice, reviews, and more. [Applicants](#) and [service providers](#) should review their respective [eLearning Module courses](#) prior to attending. You can submit questions when you register for this session.

Open Data Webinar Part 2: Creating Reports and Visualizations

June 25, 2026 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. E.T. [Register](#).

- This *follow-up webinar* to the Open Data Overview (Webinar 1) is for advanced users and **dives more deeply into using E-Rate's Open Data Tools to create reports and visualizations**. Participants can expect to learn how to create their own Open Data accounts and share content with other users. There will also be a demonstration of how to create custom reports and an overview of uses for visualizations.

Webinar Recordings

Beginning E-Rate Services Webinar (June 9, 2026)

This [webinar](#) provides E-Rate participants with a high-level overview of the steps in the E-Rate process after they received a funding commitment for eligible equipment and services. It is recommended for E-Rate participants at all experience levels. View [webinar slides](#).

Open Data Webinar Part 1: Open Data Overview (June 16, 2026)

Enhance your E-Rate program experience with Open Data, USAC's data sharing platform. This [webinar](#) is the first in a two-part series and provides an overview of the E-Rate specific tools and datasets in Open Data. View [webinar slides](#).

Conferences

- **American Libraries Association (ALA) Conference** from **June 25-29, 2026** (Chicago, Illinois). [Event link](#).
- **International Society for Technology in Education's ISTE Live and ASCD** (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) **Conference** from **June 28-July 1, 2026** (Orlando, Florida). [Event link](#).

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