



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

E-Rate

E-Rate News Brief

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E-Rate Tips

- **FY2026 PIA Processing Delays.** If you are experiencing processing delays with your FY2026 applications, please note that USAC is working through Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) reviews for the remaining applications as quickly as possible. To help expedite reviews, we encourage program participants to **monitor their email and E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) account** and respond quickly to any USAC inquiries.
- **FY2027 Competitive Bidding.** You should consider starting your FY2027 [competitive bidding process](#) now if you are a large entity (e.g., school district, library system, consortium) or you plan to submit many FCC Form 471 applications. Getting an early start will help ensure you have sufficient time to carefully consider your service and equipment needs, the bids you receive, and comply with any state and local bidding requirements. See the [Competitive Bidding Reminders](#) below for more information.
- For **applicants that received an extension of the FY2025 September 30, 2026 deadline** for delivery and installation of **non-recurring services**, you should work with your service providers to extend your contracts to cover the

additional time, if necessary. You can then report the new contract expiration date to USAC by filing an [FCC Form 500](#).

- **Newly Debarred Individuals.** The FCC's Enforcement Bureau **issued Notices of Debarment for seven individuals** on September 3, 2026, following [Notices of Suspension](#) issued earlier this year. Each debarred individual was convicted of criminal conduct in connection with the E-Rate program. View the [E-Rate Suspensions & Debarments](#) page for more information and to view the suspension and debarment notices.

E-Rate Funding Year (FY) 2026 Commitments

FY2026. USAC released FY2026 Wave 20 on September 10. As of September 16, FY2026 commitments total over \$1.88 billion.

On the date that Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) are issued, you can access your FCDL notification letter from the **Notifications** section of your landing page in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC).

You can also use the [E-Rate Search Commitments Tool](#) to look up prior funding year commitment data.

Update FCC Form 498 with SAM.gov Registration and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)

On September 8, 2026, USAC started using the banking information from SAM.gov to remit E-Rate disbursements. All E-Rate Service Provider Invoice (SPI) filers (service providers using the FCC Form 474 to receive disbursements) and Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (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 UEI** to their FCC Form 498 in EPC to receive disbursements.

SPI and BEAR filers who have not completed the SAM.gov registration process and added their UEI to EPC can submit invoices but will not receive disbursements until these steps are completed. Go to the [Manage Your 498 ID](#) page to update your FCC Form 498 information.

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

FY2025 Invoicing Deadline Reminders for Recurring Services

In most cases, **October 28, 2026, is the deadline** to submit an invoice **or** request a one-time 120-day invoice deadline extension (IDE) for **FY2025 recurring services** Funding Request Numbers (FRNs). To receive an IDE, your request **must be made before or within 15 days** of the **original invoice deadline date (IDD)**. The deadline to submit an invoice or request an IDE applies to both applicant and service provider invoices – the FCC Form 472 (BEAR Form) and FCC Form 474 (SPI) and (eSPI)), respectively.

How To Request an IDE for FRNs From FY2016 Forward

Both applicants and service providers can request an IDE in EPC by following the steps below. Remember that there is no penalty for requesting an IDE and not using it.

- **Applicants:**

- On your invoicing landing page, click the link to the billed entity record (the name in the **Welcome!** link near the top of the page or the first entry under the **My Entities** section).
- Select the **Related Actions** menu and choose **Invoice Deadline Date Extension Request**.

- **Service providers:**

- From the **Records** tab at the top of any EPC page, click the **Service Providers** option.
- Use the **Search** function to locate your service provider record.
- Select the **Related Actions** menu and choose **Invoice Deadline Date Extension Request**.

You can use the [E-Rate FRN Status Tool FY2016+](#) to find the IDD for an FRN by searching for the relevant FRN(s) and looking in the "Last Date to Invoice" column.

USAC has created a new [E-Rate Post Commitment Deadline Tool](#) for applicants and service providers to **better track critical post-commitment deadlines** applicable to the E-Rate program. Specifically, the tool allows users to track invoicing deadlines, the FCC Form 473 (*Service Provider Annual Certification*, or SPAC) status, and the FCC Form 486 status in a unified interface to ensure applicants and service providers have visibility into the final stages of the funding lifecycle. You can learn more in the [August 2026 E-Rate News Brief](#) or view the [PC Deadline Tool User Guide 2026](#).

FY2026 FCC Form 486 Deadline Reminder

October 29, 2026, is the deadline to file a FY2026 FCC Form 486 if your FCDL **is dated on or before July 1, 2026 and your service start date is July 1, 2026**. If these conditions apply to you, please certify and submit your [FCC Form 486](#) on or before the deadline.

If your FCC Form 486 is not received by the deadline, we will send an **FCC Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letter** to remind you that the form is due. The service start date you reported on your FCC Form 471 is used to determine when the letter is sent, so if your service start date changed, your deadline may also have changed.

The reminder letter is posted to your EPC **News** feed and is emailed to the contact person on the FCC Form 471. You have 15 days after the date of the reminder letter to submit and certify your FCC Form 486 without penalty.

Applicants whose services started after July 1, 2026, or whose FCDLs are dated after July 1, 2026 (including any that have not yet been issued), will have an FCC Form 486 deadline later than October 29, 2026. However, we encourage you to submit and certify your FCC Form 486 as soon as possible after services start for FY2026 if you can accurately make all the certifications on the form.

The [FRN Invoice Deadline Tool](#) provides the ability to search, view, and download invoice-related data including the FCC Form 486 status and deadline date. View the [training video](#) to learn more about this tool.

Competitive Bidding Reminders for FY2027

The FCC Form 470 and competitive bidding are the initial steps in the E-Rate program application process. Now that the FY2027 [FCC Form 470](#) is available to applicants to submit and certify and start their competitive bidding processes, we are providing some reminders to help you through the remainder of the competitive bidding process.

Start FY2027 off right by setting yourself up for success in the program. Ensure you have followed all the FCC's competitive bidding regulations for the E-Rate program using this year's competitive bidding checklist:

- ❑ **Provide sufficient information** for all potential bidders to **provide a comprehensive, responsive bid** (e.g., for managed internal broadband services, specify the exact equipment/services to be managed). Include all information needed for potential vendors to provide a comprehensive, responsive bid on the FCC Form 470/RFP (request for proposal).
- ❑ **Ensure an [open and fair](#) process.** Provide any FCC Form 470, RFP, and other information/updates in EPC for all potential bidders for at least 28 days and consider all responsive bids in your bid evaluation. Answer questions from potential bidders and make the answers available to all potential bidders. **Potential bidders** (i.e., service providers) **cannot help you complete or file the FCC Form 470.**
- ❑ **Abide by the E-Rate Gift Rules.** Receipt or solicitation of gifts by applicants from service providers (and vice versa) is a competitive bidding violation. Gift prohibitions are always applicable – not just during the competitive bidding process. View the [Gift Rules video](#) for more details on the gift rules.
- ❑ Ensure that **all equipment/services you request on the FCC Form 471 are listed on the FCC Form 470/RFP** (including **all requested bandwidth speeds**). Specifically for Internet Access/Data Transmission Services, applicants should ensure that speeds of services requested on the FCC Form 471 are reflected on the FCC Form 470/RFP.
- ❑ **Wait at least the full [28-day competitive bidding period](#)** before selecting a winning service provider and awarding a contract. Select a service provider **after your allowable contract date (ACD) but before certifying the FCC Form 471**. The ACD is found on your FCC Form 470 receipt notification letter (RNL). Learn how the [28-day waiting period is calculated](#).
- ❑ Ensure **price is the primary evaluation factor** (highest weighted factor). Only the costs of E-Rate **eligible** equipment/services should be evaluated in this criterion.
- ❑ **Follow your state and local competitive bidding rules.** Ensure that you are following all applicable state and local procurement rules and regulations in addition to the requirements of the E-Rate program.
- ❑ **Retain all necessary competitive bidding documentation** for at least ten (10) years after the last day you receive services or the end of the applicable funding year, whichever date is later. For more information on the competitive bidding documentation you should retain, view the [E-Rate Program List of Documents to Retain for Audits and to Show Compliance with Program Rules](#). If a consultant or another representative is handling your competitive bidding process, you are still responsible for retaining your competitive bidding documentation for the 10-year period.

For a comprehensive review of all things competitive bidding, view the [E-Rate FCC Form 470 and Competitive Bidding](#) webinar held on August 6, 2026 or the [webinar slides](#).

View the [How to File an FCC Form 470](#) learning module and the [FY2027+ FCC Form 470 Services Guiding Statements Table](#) on the USAC website to help you get started with your FY2027 competitive bidding process.

EPC Administrative Window Opens October 21, 2026

The [EPC administrative window](#) is the period during which applicants can make **updates to their profile information**, including student counts, National School Lunch Program (NSLP) participation rates, library square footage, and the entities and individuals associated with your entity, including consulting firms, in EPC to prepare for the upcoming FY2027 FCC Form 471 application filing window. Applicants and service providers should also review their EPC account permissions and make updates as needed (see [article below](#)).

The administrative window **will open Wednesday, October 21, 2026** and will close **shortly before the FY2027 FCC Form 471 application filing window opens in early 2027**. After this time, applicant profiles will be locked, and you will not be able to make changes to your profile information.

FY2027 will be the second year of the FY2026-2030 Category Two (C2) budget cycle so applicants should update their student counts or library square footage as needed. The information in your EPC profile will be used to calculate a forecasted C2 budget for the FY2026-2030 cycle in the first year that you apply for C2 during the cycle.

Go to the [EPC Administrative Window](#) page for detailed information on updating entity profiles.

Updating Account Administrators in EPC: Applicants and Service Providers

Some applicants who intended to update their profiles in EPC during the current administrative window have realized that they do not have an active Account Administrator and cannot perform their updates. If you are in this situation, follow the guidance below.

If your Account Administrator is leaving or changing responsibilities and another employee will take over their duties, the current Account Administrator can assign those duties to the employee by using the **Modify Account Administrator** function in EPC.

If your Account Administrator is no longer available, call the E-Rate Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100 for assistance. Note that you must be an authorized employee of the applicant to assume the Account Administrator role. The Account Administrator role cannot be assigned to a consultant, attorney, or other third-party representative of the applicant.

- If you are already a user on your entity's EPC account and are an authorized employee of the applicant, CSC can assign the Account Administrator role to you.
- If you are not a user on your entity's EPC account and are an authorized employee of the applicant, CSC must first add you as a user on the account. After you have established your username and password and accepted the Terms and Conditions for using EPC, CSC can then assign the Account Administrator role to you.

Go to the [Customer Service Center Documentation](#) page to learn what is required to add or update Account Administrator information.

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 the Washington, DC in-person training event.**

- **E-Rate Training – Washington, DC: September 24, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. local time** at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) headquarters, 45 L Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. ([view agenda](#)). [Register](#). Please note that there is limited seating for this venue.
 - 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](#). 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.

In-Person Training Materials Available

E-Rate experts provided training, discussed program updates, and answered questions from new and experienced participants in **Phoenix, Arizona** (September 15). View the [training materials](#).

Information on these events and presentation materials are available on the [In-Person E-Rate Training Events](#) webpage.

Upcoming Webinars

Category Two Budgets

October 1, 2026

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

[Register](#)

In this applicant-focused presentation, USAC will provide an overview of C2 budgets and C2 budget guidance for the FY2026-2030 C2 budget cycle. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session (remember to submit any questions when you register). This webinar is intended for program participants of all experience levels.

EPC Administrative Window

October 15, 2026

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

[Register](#)

USAC will discuss the EPC Administrative Window – the period during which applicants can make updates to their EPC profile information to prepare for the upcoming FCC Form 471 application

filing window. We will discuss how to update your EPC profiles, and some Administrative Window best practices. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session.

Eligible Services 101

November 3, 2026

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

[Register](#)

This webinar will review E-Rate eligible services and discuss the Eligible Services List (ESL). It is suitable for both applicants and service providers. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session to help participants better understand E-Rate service eligibility.

Webinar Recordings

E-Rate Program Overview (September 10, 2026). This [webinar](#) provides an overview of the E-Rate application process and explains basic program concepts. We will highlight recent program updates, including entity eligibility, eligible services, and the E-Rate application process. This webinar was intended for program participants of all experience levels and included a question-and-answer session. View [webinar slides](#).

Conferences

- **Association for Rural and Small Libraries Conference** (Montgomery, Alabama) from **September 16-19, 2026**. [Event link](#).
- **Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition AnchorNets** (Virginia) from **October 7-9, 2026**. [Event link](#).
- **New England Library Association Conference** (Vermont) from **October 25-27, 2026**. [Event link](#).

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