

# E-Rate Pre-Commitment Q&A Session

February 22, 2024



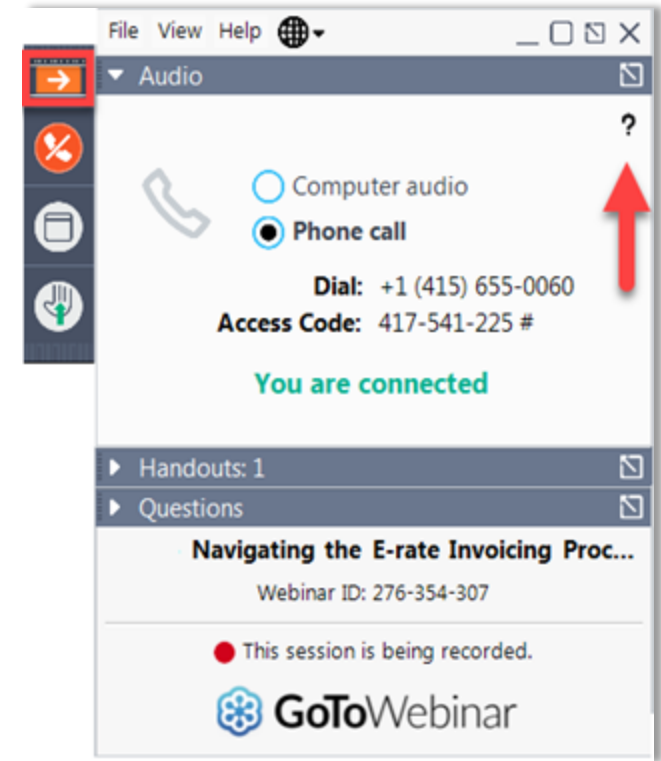
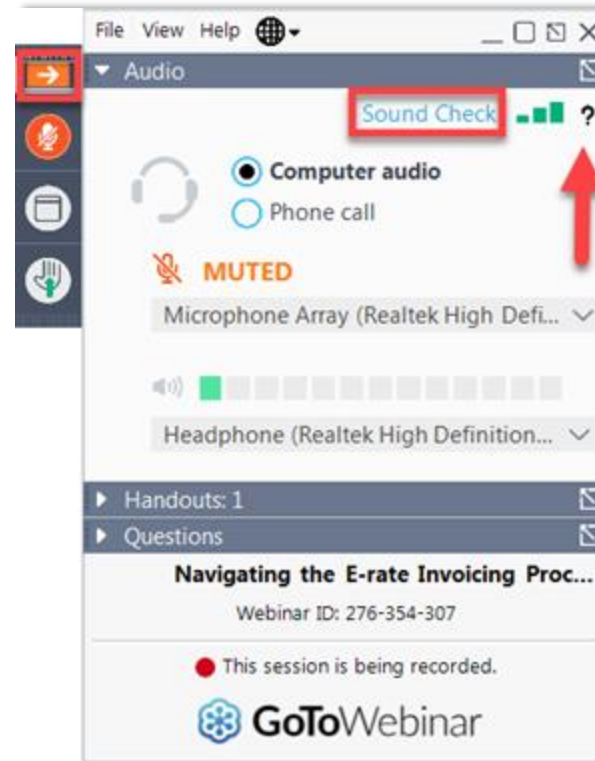
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# Disclaimer

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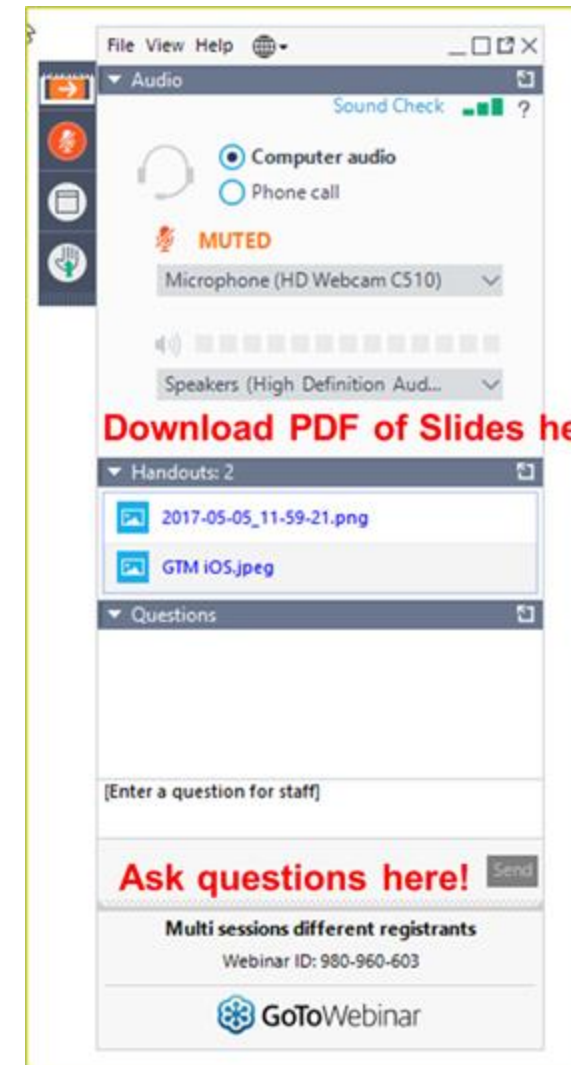
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# Housekeeping

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- A copy of the slide deck is in the "Handouts" section of the webinar panel.



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# MEET THE TEAM



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Associate Manager of Program Management | E-Rate



**Ben Yehuda**

Assistant Program Analyst | E-Rate



**Shawn Jensen**

Sr. Program Analyst | E-Rate

# Agenda

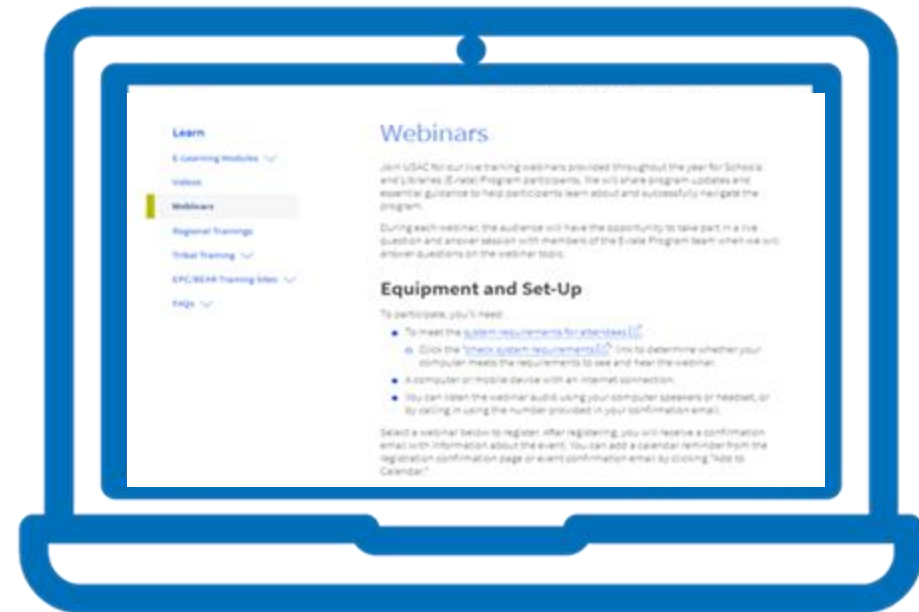
- Q&A Session Overview and Purpose
- Wi-Fi on Buses
- Allowable Contract Date
- Annual Training Pre-Commitment Process
- Competitive Bidding and FCC Form 470 Webinar
- Resources
- Q & A

# **Q&A Session Overview and Purpose**



# Q&A Session Webinar and Training Series

- Provide targeted program information.
- Assist program participants with timely and topic relevant questions.
- Equip program participants with knowledge about E-Rate resources.
- Recommended for: Applicants and service providers
- E-Rate experience level: All



# Q&A Session Structure and Format

- USAC team members will provide a high-level overview of the topic materials.
- Participants should read the assigned materials and watch assigned videos in advance of the webinar event and come prepared with questions to ask during the Q&A session.
- Questions related to the topics and experience level will be given priority.

# Wi-Fi on Buses: FCC Form 471

# School Buses: Now E-Rate Eligible

- Equipment and services necessary to provide mobile broadband **connectivity on school buses are E-Rate eligible** when used for **educational purposes**.
  - Installation fees and equipment needed to make the wireless service for school buses functional **are also eligible** under Category One.
- School bus Wi-Fi services are eligible for school-owned, leased or contracted school buses, **if used primarily to transport students to and from school and school-related activities** for educational purposes. Charter, municipal, city buses and other school-owned vehicles (i.e., cars and vans) are not eligible.
- Separate maintenance and operations services related to mobile broadband connectivity for school buses are also **not eligible**.

## School Buses: Competitive Bidding

- School bus Wi-Fi is subject to **all** existing E-Rate rules and requirements, including competitive bidding, cost allocation, and discounting rules.
  - Applicants are not required to compare costs between a given service plan for providing school bus Wi-Fi and other technological approaches to deliver connectivity to end user devices.
- Applicants who entered into multi-year agreements for Bus Wi-Fi in the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) program are **not exempt** from competitive bidding requirements.
- The competitive bidding exemption for Commercially Available Business Class Internet Option (CABIO) services **does not apply to bus services**. It only applies to services delivered to a school or library building.
- Service provider selection must be consistent with E-Rate program rules including selecting the most cost-effective service offering(s), using **price of the eligible equipment and services as the primary factor** in the evaluation matrix.

## School Buses: Restrictions/Limitations on Usage

- Equipment and services must primarily be utilized for **educational purposes** as defined by E-Rate rules.
- There are no new user or CIPA restrictions for Bus Wi-Fi. All restrictions must be consistent with those placed on building-based broadband networks.
- Wi-Fi should **only be active during school bus normal operating hours** (i.e., when students are being transported to and from school or school-related activities) or when there is a **clear educational purpose** for enabling school bus Wi-Fi connections outside of these hours.
- Bus Wi-Fi service must be disabled outside of these hours and cannot be utilized for community use purposes.

# School Buses: How to Seek Bids on the FCC Form 470

- USAC released an article on [how to seek bids for Wi-Fi on school buses in FY2024](#)
- The FY 2024 FCC Form 470 **has not changed** since USAC posted it in July 2023. Applicants seeking bids for Wi-Fi on buses should use the following drop-downs:
  - Select “Category 1 — Data Transmission and/or Internet Access” in the **Service Requests** section under **Category(s) of Service**.
  - You will be required by EPC to upload a Request for Proposal (RFP) document. Select YES under RFPs for Service Requests.
  - Add a narrative (e.g., “Applicant seeks bids for wireless school bus service and (if applicable) associated equipment to make the service functional to provide Wi-Fi. Reference the associated “RFP” document for additional information.”)
  - Add a new service request, selecting the following EPC guiding statements in sequential order:
    - I seek bids for internet access and/or data transmission service.
    - I seek bids for Internet access and data transmission service (provided over any combination of transmission medium, e.g., fiber-only networks, fiber/non-fiber hybrid networks, or non-fiber networks such as cable, DSL, copper, satellite, or microwave).
    - I seek bids for data plans or wireless adapters (Air Cards) for mobile devices for commercial wireless service for a school or library that does not have an existing broadband internal connections.
  - Provide remaining details like quantity and entities.

## School Buses: Filing the FCC Form 471

After waiting at least 28 days and selecting the most cost-effective service provider(s), submit and certify the [FCC Form 471](#) during the FY2024 application filing window.

- When submitting an FCC Form 471 for school bus Wi-Fi funding requests, applicants should:
  - Submit a separate FCC Form 471 for wireless school bus services
  - Submit a separate funding request number (FRN) for each contract or vendor for these services
  - Use "School Bus Wi-Fi or a similar name as the FCC Form 471 nickname
  - List all schools as recipients of the service that will be served by the buses
- School Bus Wi-Fi equipment and services are submitted in EPC on FCC Form 471 as Category One – Data Transmission and/or Internet Access requests.
- Application Filing Window deadline - March 27, 2024
- Watch the [FCC Form 471 video series](#) for step-by-step filing guidance.



# School Buses: Filing the FCC Form 471 Instructions

On the FCC Form 471, after selecting C1 on the Category of Service screen, progress through the form until you get to the Funding Request screen. Click "Add FRN."

- Recommendation: In the Funding Request Key Information screen, enter a form nickname that includes "School Bus Wi-Fi" along with other identifying information for your situation.
1. On the FRN Contract screen, select "Month-to-Month" if that is your arrangement with the service provider, **OR** select "Contract" if you have a signed contract.
  2. Associate the contract to the funding request on the next screen. Select "No" to designate that the FRN does not include a Fiber or Wireless request.
  3. On the next screen, for the FRN Narrative, enter "Applicant seeks support for wireless school bus service." If applicable, add "and associated equipment to make the service functional." Include make and model information, the number of buses serviced, and other relevant information.
  4. Click "Save & View FRNs" or "Save and Add/Manage FRN Line Items."

# School Buses: Filing the FCC Form 471 Instructions

The FRN Line Item level is used to add more details about the specific equipment and services for School Bus Wi-Fi.

1. Click "Add New FRN Line Item."
2. On the Product and Service Details for the FRN Line Item, under "Purpose," select "Internet access service that includes a connection from any applicant site directly to the Internet Service Provider."
3. In the Function text box, enter "Wireless School Bus Service." From the Type of Connection dropdown menu, select "Wireless data service," "Equipment," "Installation", etc., as applicable.
4. After making selections from the Type of Connection dropdown, enter the "Number of Buses Being Serviced" in the text box that appears.
5. On the next screen, provide bandwidth speeds, connection information such as whether the request includes firewall services or if the connection provides a wide area network, the costs associated with the line item, and the recipients of service (at least one must be a school).
6. Once all information is completed, you will be returned to the Add New FRN Line Item screen where you can add more line items as needed or continue with your form.

# Allowable Contract Date

# 28-Day Waiting Period Review and Reminders

The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) rules require applicants to wait at least 28 days after their [FCC Form 470](#) before selecting a service provider, executing any contracts for contracted services, or signing and submitting an [FCC Form 471](#).

Your state or local procurement regulations may require a longer waiting period or impose additional requirements.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the 28-day waiting period:

- **When does the waiting period start?** *The calendar day **after** you certify your FCC Form 470, the day you certify is day zero. For example, if you certify on 1/1/2024, the waiting period starts on 1/2/2024 and your Allowable Contract Date is 1/29/2024 (see slide 23 for a visual aid).*
- **Do weekends count as a part of the 28 days?** *Yes, the 28-day period is based on calendar days.*
- **When can you select a vendor?** *After the 28-day waiting period (see slide 3 for a visual aid), unless your FCC Form 470 lists a later bid deadline.*
- **When's the last day you can select a vendor?** *You must select the most cost-effective service offering before you submit the FCC Form 471.*
- **When can you stop receiving bids?** *You may set a bid deadline and include it to your narrative or RFP. This deadline must be at least 28 days after verifying your FCC Form 470 or longer depending on state rules. If you **do not add a deadline to your narrative or RFP**, you must accept bids up until you evaluate bids and make a vendor selection. These deadlines should be memorialized in your records.*

# Modifications to the FCC Form 470

Applicants are permitted to correct ministerial and clerical errors and to modify their FCC Form 470, but the changes must not materially affect the original competitive bidding process (e.g., changing contact information would not substantially change the process). These types of changes would not require a reset of the original 28-day waiting period.

If the applicant needs to make changes to the FCC Form 470 that would substantially affect the competitive bidding (e.g., adding a new category of service), the applicant can either (Option 1) cancel the form and file a new FCC Form 470, with the new 28-day waiting period displayed in EPC starting on the date the corrected FCC Form 470 is certified; or (Option 2) make the substantive change to the RFP and recalculate and track the 28-day waiting period outside of EPC.

See the [Ministerial and Clerical Errors](#) page for some examples of what qualifies as ministerial and clerical vs. substantial changes.

A list of additional [E-Rate FAQs](#) across all areas of the program are posted on the USAC website.

# Allowable Contract Date Infographic

CALENDAR						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	<b>Certified FCC Form 470</b> Day 0	31 Day 1	1 Day 2	2 Day 3	3 Day 4	4 Day 5
5 Day 6	6 Day 7	7 Day 8	8 Day 9	9 Day 10	10 Day 11	11 Day 12
12 Day 13	13 Day 14	14 Day 15	15 Day 16	16 Day 17	17 Day 18	18 Day 19
19 Day 20	20 Day 21	21 Day 22	22 Day 23	23 Day 24	24 Day 25	25 Day 26
26 Day 27	<b>Allowable Contract Date</b> Day 28	28	29	30	1	2

## Remember

If the 470 narrative or RFP does not include a bid submission deadline



then applicants are **required** to accept all bids up until they conduct their evaluation.

- This is the earliest you can select a vendor.<sup>1</sup>
- You can wait up until you certify FCC Form 471 to select a vendor.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This may vary based on state and local procurement rules.  
<sup>2</sup> You must select a vendor before the filing window closes.

# Q&A Session: Prerequisites

- [2023 Annual Training E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process Webinar](#)
- [Filing the FCC Form 470 and the Competitive Bidding Process Webinar](#)



# Prerequisite Webinars



# Prerequisite Webinars

## 2023 Annual Training E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process Webinar

- Requesting Funding (FCC Form 471)
- How to File the FCC Form 471
- FCC Form 471 Checklist
- Document retention

## Filing the FCC Form 470 and the Competitive Bidding Process Webinar

- How to File an FCC Form 470
- How to Search for FCC Forms 470
- E-Rate Competitive Bidding Process
- Open and Fair
- Waiting 28 Days

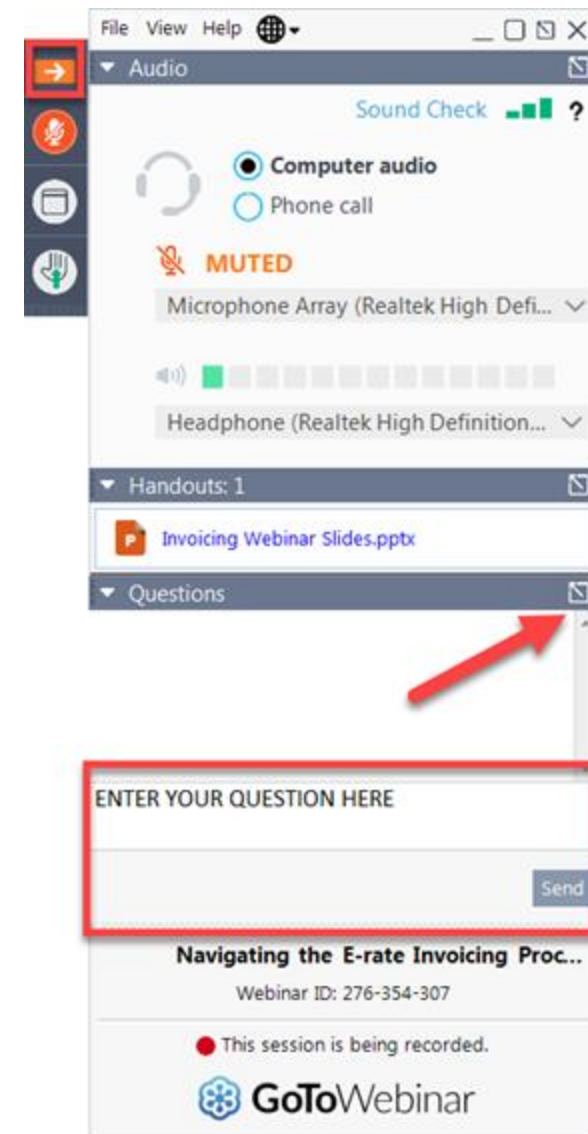
# Resources

- [E-Rate Program Overview Video: Applicants](#)
- [Competitive Bidding Infographic](#)
- [Competitive Bidding FAQs](#)
- [FCC Form 471 Submission Checklist](#)
- [FCC Form 471 Video Series](#)
- [Eligible Services List Q&A Session](#)
- [FCC Form 471 Q&A Session](#)



# Housekeeping – Q&A

- Use the “Questions” box in your webinar control panel to submit your question in writing.
  - Click the box with the arrow above the questions box to expand it.
  - Ask questions related to webinar content.



**Questions?**

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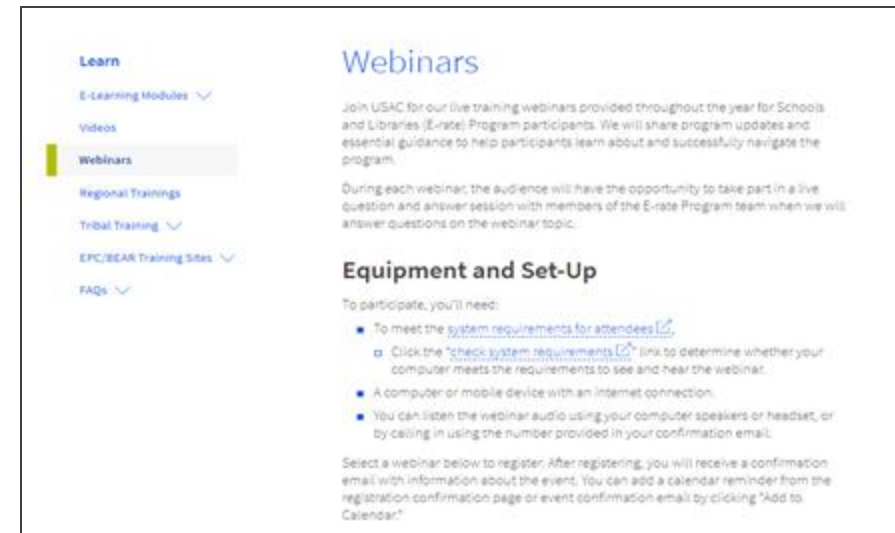
1. Log in to EPC.
2. Select the **Contact Us** link from the upper right menu on your landing page.



# Upcoming Webinars

Check the **E-Rate Webinars** page for updates on future webinars.

For additional information, subscribe to the [E-Rate News Brief](#).



The screenshot shows a webpage with a navigation menu on the left and a main content area on the right. The navigation menu includes links for 'Learn', 'E-Learning Modules', 'Videos', 'Webinars' (highlighted with a yellow bar), 'Regional Trainings', 'Tribal Training', 'EPC/SEAR Training Sites', and 'FAQs'. The main content area is titled 'Webinars' and contains the following text:

Join USAC for our live training webinars provided throughout the year for Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program participants. We will share program updates and essential guidance to help participants learn about and successfully navigate the program.

During each webinar, the audience will have the opportunity to take part in a live question and answer session with members of the E-rate Program team when we will answer questions on the webinar topic.

### Equipment and Set-Up

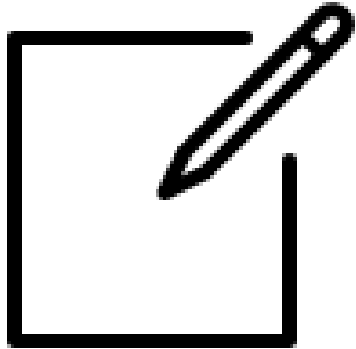
To participate, you'll need:

- To meet the [system requirements for attendees](#)
- Click the ["check system requirements"](#) link to determine whether your computer meets the requirements to see and hear the webinar.
- A computer or mobile device with an internet connection.
- You can listen the webinar audio using your computer speakers or headset, or by calling in using the number provided in your confirmation email.

Select a webinar below to register. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information about the event. You can add a calendar reminder from the registration confirmation page or event confirmation email by clicking "Add to Calendar."

Go to the E-Rate [Webinars](#) page for additional information.

# Take Our Survey



- We want to hear about your webinar experience.
- A survey will appear on your screen at the end of the webinar.
- If you are not able to complete the survey today, one will be emailed to you within one to two business days.
- We appreciate your feedback!

**Thank You!**







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