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E-Rate & EPC Overview for New Applicants

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Universal Service Administrative Co.

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Schools & Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program Overview

Pilot Program Overview

- The FCC established the three-year **Schools & Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program** to provide up to $200 million in Universal Service Fund (USF) support to participating eligible schools, libraries, and consortia of schools and libraries to defray the costs of eligible cybersecurity services and equipment.
- The Pilot Program will evaluate the effectiveness of using USF funding to support cybersecurity services and equipment to protect school and library broadband networks and data.

Entity Eligibility

Pilot Program Eligibility

- Schools, libraries, and consortia of schools and libraries that are eligible for support under the E-Rate program can participate in the Pilot Program.
- Prior or current E-Rate participation is not a requirement to be eligible to apply for the Pilot Program.

What Entities Are Eligible?

- **Schools** – Elementary and secondary schools as defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
  - For-profit schools are not eligible
  - Schools with endowments of $50 million or greater are not eligible
  - Educational Service Agencies are eligible in some states and territories
- **Libraries (includes Tribal Libraries and Tribal College and University (TCU) Libraries)**
- **Consortia of Eligible Entities – (a consortium of eligible schools and/or libraries)**
  - Consortia members must have a signed letter of agreement with the consortia leader that authorizes the lead to take specific actions on behalf of the members
  - A Tribal government can create a consortium and include its Tribally controlled schools and libraries as consortium members, and a Tribal government employee can act as the contact person for the consortium leader.

Library Eligibility

- An eligible library must be eligible for assistance from State Library administrative agency under the Library Services Technology Act (LSTA), as amended by the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018.
- A library may be designated as a Tribal library by a Tribal Council (e.g., pursuant to a Tribal Resolution) and becomes eligible for USF support as long as it has the following three characteristics:
  - Regularly scheduled hours,
  - Staff, and
  - Materials available for library users.
- The library's budget must be completely separate from that of any school.
  - **Tribal College and University (TCU)** libraries can apply for E-Rate support when they are also serving as a public library in their community by having dedicated library staff, regular hours, and a collection available for public use. E-Rate support is restricted to TCU library use only (see FCC 23-56 issued on July 21, 2023).
- Cannot operate as a for-profit business.

E-Rate Tribal Entity

- Definition Updated for FY2024 in FCC 23-56 and the Federal Register:
  - An entity is “Tribal” for purposes of E-Rate funding if it is a **school operated by or receiving funding** from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), *or*
  - if it is a **school or library *operated by*** any Tribe, Band, Nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska native village, regional corporation, or village corporation (as defined in, or established pursuant to, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*)) that is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.
- Check the Tribal box in your entity’s profile in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) when setting up your account. You will also be asked to provide your Tribal affiliation.

Consortium Eligibility

- A consortium (plural consortia or consortiums) is a **group of E-Rate eligible entities** that seeks competitive bids or E-Rate funding for eligible equipment and services on behalf of its members.
- Consortia are not themselves eligible for discounted services, but they can conduct competitive bidding processes and/or apply for eligible equipment and services on behalf of their members.
- Schools and libraries can join together to form consortia. There are two common reasons why applicants will choose to form a consortium:
  - One is to aggregate demand for **lower prices**; and
  - The other is to provide expertise to **assist small entities with the application process**. These small entities can join together and work with the consortium leader to conduct the competitive bidding and application processes on their behalf.
- The consortium leader is responsible for ensuring that necessary certifications are made, responding to USAC inquiries on behalf of members, and maintaining records.
- Review the Registration Checklist for New Tribal Libraries (PDF)

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Eligible Services Overview

Pilot Program Eligible Services

- Participants may seek reimbursement for a wide variety of cybersecurity services and equipment, subject to per-student/per-library budgets
- Four general categories of eligible services and equipment:
  - Advanced/next generation firewalls;
  - Endpoint protection;
  - Identity protection and authentication; and
  - Monitoring, detection and response.
- The Pilot Eligible Services List (P-ESL) contains a non-exhaustive list of the types of services and equipment that are eligible

Before You Begin

SAM.gov Registration

- Pilot Program applicants must have an active registration with the federal System for Award Management (SAM.gov).
- SAM.gov is a federal system; instructions to register are available.
- SAM.gov registration can take a few weeks.

FCC Registration Number

- Schools, libraries, and consortia must have an FCC Registration Number to participate in the Pilot Program.
- Schools, libraries, and service providers can obtain an FCC Registration Number by visiting the FCC's Commission Registration System (CORES) and completing the registration process.
  - You will need your Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) to obtain an FCC Registration Number.
  - For some employers, including state and local government agencies and non-profit organizations, the TIN is the IRS-issued Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- If a school, library, or service provider is already registered with the FCC, it does not need a new FCC Registration Number to apply for or receive support from the Pilot Program.

Billed Entity Number (BEN)

- E-Rate applicants that are already registered in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) will get access to the Pilot Program application (FCC Form 484 Part 1) with their existing credentials.
- New applicants can call the E-Rate Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100 to set up a BEN.

E-Rate Productivity Center

What Is the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC)?

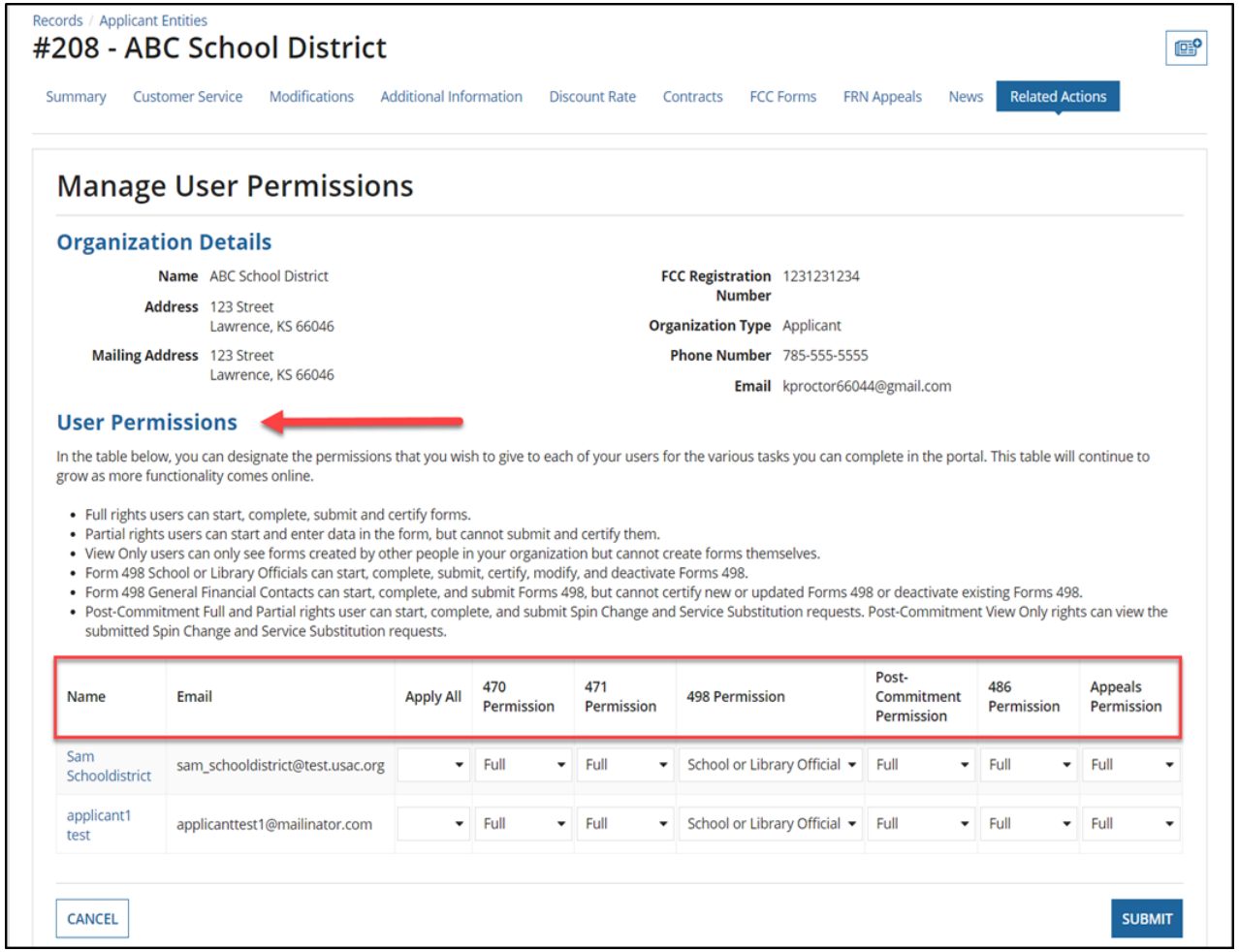
- EPC is the account and application management portal for the E-Rate program and the Pilot Program.
- Program participants use this tool to manage program processes, receive notifications, and contact the CSC.
- USAC offers trainings for new EPC users.

Set Up an EPC Account

- After setting up a BEN, the CSC will provide EPC access.
- Select an Account Administrator who manages your account, grants rights to other users (including consultants), and provides or updates information on the schools in your school district or libraries in your library system.
- The Account Administrator must be an employee of the school or library system.

Account Administrator Grants User Permissions

- The Account Administrator determines which rights to grant each user.



User Permission Levels in EPC

The Account Administrator determines which EPC users can view, create, certify, and submit FCC forms and requests. It is a good practice to review these user permission levels annually and update where needed.

- A “Full-Rights” user **can complete and certify forms on behalf of the BEN**, update profile information, and receive all USAC communications regarding the BEN.
  - For example, you may determine that a **school or library official** should have this level.
- A “Partial-Rights” user can **create users and forms** (but not certify those forms) and update profile information.
  - You may decide that a general financial contact should have this access level.
- “View-Only” rights users can view (but not update) the accounts.

Review User Permission Levels

- To review User Permission Levels:
  - Log in to EPC
  - From the Landing page, click **Manage Users**
  - Click on your BEN and select **Add and Remove Existing Users**
  - Review the **Permission** fields and **Active** field

- To update user permission levels, add users, or reactivate a deactivated user, please see the EPC Account Administrator Guide.

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Calculating Discount Rates

Calculating Discount Rate

- Discount rates are determined based on the percentage of students enrolled in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and an entity's urban or rural status.
- The Pilot Program will use E-Rate's Category One (C1) Discount Rate to determine an entity's discount percentage.
- Find more information about calculating discount rates.
- Entities will enter student count and urban/rural status in EPC when setting up account.

Calculating Discount Rate – Schools

In general, the school district calculation is the basis for discount calculations for all types of entities. To calculate the discount for a school district:

- Determine the total number of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in the school district.
- Determine the total number of students in the school district.
- Divide the first number by the second number to get the percentage of students eligible for NSLP in the school district.
- Using this percentage and the urban or rural status of the school district, find the appropriate C1 for the school district in the discount matrix.

Calculating Discount Rate – Libraries

To calculate the discount for a library system:

- Determine the total number of students eligible for the NSLP in the public school district in which the main branch or main administrative office of the library is located.
- Determine the total number of students in that school district.
- Divide the first number by the second number to get the percentage of students eligible for NSLP in that school district.
- Using this percentage and the urban or rural status of the library system, find the appropriate C1 discount for the school district in the discount matrix.
- The Find Your Library Discount Guide can help you look up the benefits you may receive through the Pilot Program.

Calculating Discount Rate – Consortium/Statewide

To calculate the discount for a consortium or statewide application:

- List each member of the consortium or statewide application together with its discount as calculated in the previous slides
- Add the discounts and divide by the number of members to calculate the average discount to use

Discount Matrix

Income *Measured by percentage of students eligible for NSLP*	**Urban Status Discount Rate**	**Rural Status Discount Rate**
Less than 1%	20%	25%
1% to 19%	40%	50%
20% to 34%	50%	60%
35% to 49%	60%	70%
50% to 74 %	80%	80%
75% to 100%	90% for C1	
	Tribal Libraries: **90% for C1**	

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Category One (C1) Services

Questions?

Pilot Program: Stay Informed

Pilot Program: Upcoming Trainings

FCC Form 484 Part One – Overview

Tuesday, August 20 at 3 p.m. ET

Register here

Pilot Program: Stay Informed

- FCC and USAC will host Pilot Program trainings
- Sign up for Pilot Program emails
- FCC Cybersecurity Website
- USAC Cybersecurity Pilot Program Website
- FAQs are available on the FCC and USAC websites
  - Will be expanded throughout the program

E-Rate Customer Service Center (CSC)

Call us on (888) 203-8100

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET

Create a customer service case in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC):

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

Thank You!

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