E-Rate Tribal e-Newsletter

September 22, 2022

Dear Tribal Partner,

We invite you to join us next month for our upcoming E-Rate fall training series. Full details are below. We also invite you to join us in November and December for office hour sessions specifically designed for our Tribal E-Rate applicants. Please register below, and we hope you can join us!

Mark Your Calendar

September Tribal Teleconference

USAC will host an E-Rate Tribal teleconference on September 27 at 4 p.m. ET. Visit the Tribal Training webpage to register for the teleconference. Registration is free but required to attend. To submit questions for the teleconference, email TribalLiaison@usac.org or bring them to the session.

USAC Announces E-Rate 2022 Fall Training Schedule

USAC has confirmed the E-Rate Fall 2022 Training dates for applicants and service providers that wish to learn more about the program and how to participate. The training sessions will once again be virtual, and registration for each session is now available on the Webinars page. You can also click on the links below for each session to register for that specific training. The sessions are for E-Rate program participants at all levels and will include opportunities to ask questions. Eligible Services training will be scheduled once the FY2023 Eligible Services List is released.

- **E-Rate Program Overview**: October 18, 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. ET
  - USAC will provide a high-level overview of the E-Rate application process from beginning to end, and explain basic program concepts for applicants and service providers. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session.
- **E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process**: October 20, 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. ET
  - USAC will discuss the E-Rate Pre-Commitment process. This includes how to get started, competitive bidding, applying for discounts, and Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session.
- **Category Two Budgets**: October 25, 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. ET
  - USAC will discuss Category Two (C2) budgets. We will provide an overview of C2 budgets and C2 budget guidance for FY2023. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session.
- **EPC Administrative Window**: October 27, 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. ET
  - USAC will discuss the EPC Administrative Window, the period during which applicants can make updates to their profile information in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC), to prepare for the upcoming FCC Form 471 application filing window. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session.
- **E-Rate Post-Commitment Process**: November 3, 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. ET
  - USAC will discuss the E-Rate Post-Commitment Process and other post-commitment activities. Topics include starting services, the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), service substitutions, appeals, and more. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session.

- **Eligible Services 101**: To be announced

### Fall Office Hours Sessions for Tribal E-Rate Applicants

Please join us for Office Hours sessions designed to answer questions and provide information specifically for our Tribal E-Rate applicants. Please submit any questions in advance of the sessions to TribalLiaison@usac.org.

- **Tribal E-Rate Applicants November Office Hours Session**: November 1, 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. ET
- **Tribal E-Rate Applicants December Office Hours Session**: December 6, 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. ET

### Upcoming Deadlines and Reminders

#### FY2021 Invoicing Deadline Reminders

**Friday, October 28, 2022** is the deadline to file an invoice or to request an invoice deadline extension (IDE) for most Funding Year (FY) 2021 recurring service Funding Request Numbers (FRNs). This invoice deadline applies to both applicant and service provider invoices – the FCC Form 472 (BEAR Form) and the FCC Form 474 (SPI Form), respectively.

Applicants who intend to file BEAR Forms for FY2021 recurring services should request an IDE if they do not have BEAR Form access through One Portal AND an approved FCC Form 498 (see August 18, 2022 E-Rate News Brief for information on how to submit the applicant version of the FCC Form 498). **Service providers should also request an extension if they will not be prepared to invoice for these services by the October 28 deadline.**

- For information about BEAR Form access, go to the BEAR Form Access page.
- For assistance in filing and certifying the applicant version of the FCC Form 498, you can call the Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100. Note that you cannot invoice USAC via a BEAR Form until you have provided proof of your banking information to USAC, which you can upload after you have certified the form. USAC must approve your FCC Form 498 before you can submit a BEAR Form.

**How to Request an Invoice Deadline Extension for FRNs from FY2016 and Forward**

Both applicants and service providers can request an invoice deadline extension in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) by following the steps below. Remember that there is no penalty for requesting an invoice deadline extension and not using it.

- **Applicants:**
  - On your 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.
  - Enter the FRN(s) you would like to extend, separated by commas.
  - Click the Check Eligibility button. All of the FRNs from your list that are eligible for an extension will appear on a grid.
  - Click Submit.
  - Review the resulting News post for the results.

- **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.
  - Enter the FRN(s) you would like to extend, separated by commas.
Click the **Check Eligibility** button. All of the FRNs from your list that are eligible for an extension will appear on a grid.

- **Click Submit.**
- Review the resulting News post for the results.

### FY2022 FCC Form 486 Deadline Reminder

**October 31, 2022** is the deadline to file an FY2022 FCC Form 486 if your FCDL is dated on or before July 1, 2022 and your service start date is July 1, 2022. If these conditions apply to you, please submit and certify your FCC Form 486 on or before this deadline.

If your FCC Form 486 appears to be late, we will send you an FCC Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letter to remind you of the upcoming deadline. Note that we use the service start date you reported on your FCC Form 471 to determine when to send the letter, so if your service start date has changed, your deadline may have changed as well.

This reminder letter is posted to your **News** feed in EPC, and emailed to the contact person on the FCC Form 471. **These letters will start going out after October 31, 2022 for FY2022 commitments.**

You have 15 days after the date of this letter to certify your FCC Form 486 without penalty. Again, if your service start date has changed, the service start date you enter on your certified FCC Form 486 will determine whether your filing is considered late.

Applicants whose services started after July 1, 2022, or whose FCDLs are dated after July 1, 2022 (including any that have not yet been issued), will have an FCC Form 486 deadline later than October 31. However, we encourage you to submit and certify your FCC Form 486 as soon as possible after services start for FY2022 and if you can accurately make all of the certifications on the form.

### EPC Administrative Window Opens October 25, 2022

The EPC administrative window is the period during which applicants can **make updates to their profile information** including student counts, 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 FY2023 FCC Form 471 application filing window.

Each year, USAC updates applicant profiles in EPC using the reviewed and approved profile information from their current year FCC Forms 471. We do this so that applicants can start the application process for the upcoming funding year with information that is accurate as of the date of their FCDL.

USAC has completed this process for applicants whose profile information was updated during the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review of their FY2022 applications. Applicants can now review their profiles and make any additional updates.

The administrative window will open **Tuesday, October 25, 2022** and will close shortly **before the FY2023 application filing window opens in early 2023**. After this time, applicant profiles will be locked and you will not be able to make changes to your profile information.

For detailed information on updating entity profiles, you can refer to the **EPC Administrative Window** page. Here are a few reminders for those of you who are ready to start updating your profiles:

- **School districts report their student counts separately for two different purposes** – to calculate their discount and to calculate their Category Two (C2) budget. For the C2 budget calculation, you can **request a replacement C2 budget** if student count (or square footage for libraries) information has changed but you are
not required to do so. School districts can update their individual school profiles or report a total number in the school district profile.

- If you have new child entities (individual schools for school districts or library branches for libraries), the Customer Service Center (CSC) can create them for you. Open a customer service case in EPC or call CSC at (888) 203-8100 for assistance.
- For changes affecting your FY2022 application, submit an FY2022 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) modification request or FY2022 appeal before you add new entities or new entity subtypes to your organization’s profile information. This will allow us to process your RAL modification or appeal more quickly.

The November 18, 2021 EPC Window Training slides provide instructions on how to add/update users, update entity profiles, request a replacement C2 budget if you choose to do so, and more tips.

**Program Updates**

**Guidance on An Additional Discount to Match State/Tribal Funding for Special Construction**

Applicants may request additional E-Rate discounts to match state funding for special construction projects.

For Tribal schools and libraries, E-Rate will match funding from a state, Tribal governments, or other federal agencies. In all cases, E-Rate matching funds will only be approved if the special construction project will provide high-speed broadband connections that meet the FCC’s connectivity targets adopted in the E-Rate Modernization Order, and may not be applied to any other cost.

Applicants seeking additional E-Rate discounts to match state funding for special construction must submit information with their FCC Form 471 filing that USAC will use to determine:

- Whether the state funding is from an eligible source;
- That any terms and conditions associated with the state funding are not in conflict with E-Rate rules;
- The appropriate calculation of the additional E-Rate discount, if any; and
- Whether the project meets the Commission’s connectivity targets.

For additional information, please visit our page Additional Discount to Match State/Tribal Funding for Special Construction.

**Job Announcement: USAC Tribal Liaison**

The job description for the USAC Tribal Liaison position is now posted on the USAC Careers Portal. The responsibilities for this position include supporting the E-Rate program’s Tribal training initiatives and coordinating Tribal outreach across USAC. We encourage you to review and share this exciting professional opportunity with your networks.

During the transition period, TribalLiason@usac.org and TribalTraining@usac.org will continue to be monitored regularly.

**Resources: E-Rate Program News Brief**

The E-Rate program News Brief is a monthly publication. During the busier times of the E-Rate calendar, additional issues and special editions will be published to provide important program information and deadline reminders. If you have not already, we encourage you to subscribe to the E-Rate program News Brief for helpful information and timely announcements. Below is a link to the recent E-Rate News Brief.

News Brief: September 15, 2022

**E-Rate Program Technical Assistance**
The USAC Customer Service Center (CSC) provides customer service for the Universal Service Fund (USF) programs, including the E-Rate program, with specialized agents trained to answer your E-Rate program questions.

You have two options for requesting assistance:

- Call the CSC at (888) 203-8100. CSC is operational Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. ET; or
- Open a customer service case in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC), if or once you are a registered user.

Questions or Suggestions?
Contact USAC Tribal Liaison at TribalTraining@usac.org.

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