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Universal Service  
Administrative Co.

Tribal Outreach

## August 2024 USAC Tribal Nation Newsletter

August 30, 2024

### Monthly Tribal Teleconference

In September 2024 [Universal Service Administrative Company](#)'s (USAC) Tribal Liaison will host two Tribal Teleconferences.

The first Tribal Teleconference, held in collaboration with the Rural Health Care (RHC) team, will provide RHC program updates, as well as best practices and resources to help program participants prepare for the FY2025 filing window. Please join the teleconference on **Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 4 p.m. ET** – [Register](#).

The second September Tribal Teleconference, held in collaboration with the Lifeline team, will cover the new survivor benefit that provides emergency Lifeline support for survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and related crimes under the Safe Connections Act (SCA). During this training, we will show how to assist survivors with applying for the benefit. Please join the teleconference on **Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 4 p.m. ET** – [Register](#).

USAC and the E-Rate, Emergency Connectivity Fund, High Cost, RHC, Contributors, and Service Providers Customer Service Centers (CSCs) will be **closed** on **Monday, September 2, 2024**.

The consumer-facing Lifeline customer support center will remain open.

## [E-Rate](#)

### Changes to the Funding Year (FY) 2025 FCC Form 470

This year, the FCC Form 470 includes the new features listed below. A detailed walkthrough of the form and all of the changes is available in the [How to File an FCC Form 470](#) learning module.

- Applicants can upload a request for proposal (RFP) or RFP documents after the FCC Form 470 is submitted and certified in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) but cannot remove RFP documents attached to their FCC Form 470.
- EPC users with full rights to the FCC Form 470 can cancel a certified FCC Form 470 that has not yet been cited on a committed FCC Form 471 Funding Request Number (FRN).
  - Users with partial or full rights to file FCC Forms 471 are no longer able to certify the FCC Form 471 if one of the FRNs on the form is citing a canceled FCC Form 470.
  - Applicants can view canceled FCC Forms 470 in EPC under Records -> FCC Forms 470 by selecting "Canceled" under the Status filter. Service providers can select Search FCC Forms 470 on their landing page and then select the funding year, date range for posted FCC Forms 470, and category of service. Service providers can also search from the Actions tab of EPC by selecting "Search and Export Certified FCC Forms 470".
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a report and order ([FCC 24-76](#)) on July 29 that permits eligible schools and libraries to receive E-Rate support for Wi-Fi hotspots and wireless internet services that can be used off-premises by students, school staff, and library patrons. The FCC Form 470 now

includes options to request bids for Wi-Fi hotspot devices and wireless internet access services for these devices.

- USAC has updated the FY2025 FCC Form 470 to include selections for seeking bids for school bus Wi-Fi equipment and the mobile services needed to make the equipment functional.

### Summer Deferral Period Ends September 6

E-Rate's summer deferral contact period extends from the Friday before Memorial Day (May 24) through the Friday after Labor Day (September 6). Participants unable to respond to USAC inquiries during this period had their applications for support placed in a deferred status. After the conclusion of the deferral period, USAC will make additional attempts to contact applicants and continue its reviews.

To learn more about available FCC Form 470 resources, E-Rate data tool updates, webinar recordings, and trainings, please review the [August 2024 E-Rate News Brief](#).

## Cybersecurity Pilot Program

This fall, the FCC will open the window to submit applications for the Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program (Pilot Program). The three-year Pilot Program will provide up to \$200 million in Universal Service Fund (USF) support to offset the cost of eligible cybersecurity services and equipment to protect eligible schools' and libraries' broadband networks and data.

### Manage Pilot Program User Permissions in the EPC

Beginning August 26, applicants will be able to begin making administrative updates in the EPC for the Pilot Program. Once the administrative window is open, applicants will be able to select an Account Administrator (i.e., an employee of the school, library, school district, library system, or consortium who will manage their account), grant rights to other users (including consultants and other third parties) and provide or update information on the individual schools in their school district or library sites in their library system.

The Account Administrator determines EPC user permission levels as follows:

- Full-Rights users may complete and certify forms on behalf of their school, library, school district, library system, or consortium; update profile information; and receive all Pilot Program communications from USAC.
- Partial-Rights users may add users and forms (but not certify those forms) and update profile information.
- View-Only Rights users may view (but not update) information in the EPC.

To review and set user permission levels for the Pilot Program:

1. Log into the EPC
2. From the landing page, click Manage Users
3. Check the checkbox for your Billed Entity Number (BEN) and select Manage User Permissions
4. Select CBR User Permissions
5. Select the appropriate CBR 484 Permission level for each user
6. Click Submit

To update user permission levels, add users, or reactivate a deactivated user, please see the [EPC Navigation Guide](#).

To learn more about the Pilot Program, including FAQs and webinar recordings, please visit the [Cybersecurity Learn](#) page.

## Lifeline

## FCC Announces Updated Lifeline Minimum Service Standards

On July 30, 2024, the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) released a [Public Notice](#) announcing updated minimum service standards for some Lifeline-supported broadband service and the Lifeline program's annual budget. The fixed broadband usage allowance will be 1,230 GB per month starting on **December 1, 2024**. Service providers who provide Lifeline-supported fixed broadband service will need to notify their Lifeline subscribers of this change.

The minimum service standard for mobile broadband speed will remain 3G and the standard for fixed broadband speed will remain at 25 MB download and 3 MB upload. The Lifeline minimum service standard for mobile voice service will also remain unchanged, at 1,000 minutes per month.

For the latest news and information about the implementation of the SCA, be sure to check out [Lifeline's Announcements](#) page.

Recordings of previous webinars are available on the [Lifeline Webinars](#) page.

## [High Cost](#)

### Broadband Deployment Data and FCC Form 481 Now Available to Tribal Governments

Tribal governments may now access the most recent [FCC Form 481](#) filings submitted by telecommunications carriers that serve Tribal communities with support from the High Cost program. FCC Form 481 filings are available through the [54.314 certification filing system](#) in [E-File](#).

To obtain access privileges to the 54.314 system, Tribal governments should contact the High Cost program at [Form481@usac.org](mailto:Form481@usac.org) to request an authorization form. Once granted access, Tribal officials will be able to log in to the 54.314 system and view FCC Form 481 data filed by the carriers serving their lands. For more information, see the [54.314 System Tribal User Guide](#).

To learn more about how to access carrier data, be sure to check out High Cost's [announcement](#).

## [Rural Health Care](#)

### FY2023 Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Participant Annual Report Due September 30, 2024

Per [FCC Order 19-78](#), all HCF participants receiving HCF program funding are required to submit an annual report to USAC using the provided Excel template to supplement information collected in the RHC Program application forms. The reports for FY2023 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024) are due September 30, 2024. **This means any health care provider (HCP) who received funding in FY2023 in the HCF Program is required to submit the annual report by September 30, 2024.**

#### Who is Required to Submit the Annual Report?

All HCF Program participants, both individual and consortia, must submit an annual report for each funding year in which they received HCF Program support and for the life of a supported facility or service for which the program participant received large upfront payments. Email the completed report to [RHC-Outreach@usac.org](mailto:RHC-Outreach@usac.org) by September 30, 2024. Please include the HCP name and number in the Excel file and in the subject line of the email.

For instructions on how to complete and submit the FY2023 Annual Report, please visit the [Submit Annual Report](#) webpage.

#### FY2024 Funding Request Reviews

In our continuing efforts to deliver funding decisions as soon as possible, the RHC team began funding request reviews before the filing window closed. Information Requests are issued in cases where funding requests are incomplete. Per RHC program rules, applicants have 14 calendar days to respond to Information Requests. Please be sure to reply by the deadline listed on the Information Request. **The first FY2024 funding commitments were issued on June 20, 2024, six weeks after the close of the filing window!**

## Key Dates and Trainings

### Cybersecurity Pilot Program Webinars:

- **September 10, 2024, at 3 p.m. ET** – FCC Form 481 Part 1 Overview and FAQs – [Register](#).

## E-Rate

### In-Person E-Rate Trainings:

- **September 17, 2024**, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. CT in **Dallas, Texas** – [Register](#).
- **October 7, 2024**, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET in **Washington, DC** – [Register](#).
- **October 29, 2024**, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. CT in **Fayetteville, Arkansas** – [Register](#).
- **Tribal-Focused E-Rate Training**: November 12, 2024, in Palm Springs, California. This Tribal-focused training will be held in conjunction with the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, & Museums' (ATALM) annual conference. To attend the E-Rate training, you must have registered for ATALM, as the event is now **sold out**.

### Webinar:

- **September 5, 2024**, from 2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. ET – E-Rate Program Overview – [Register](#).
- **September 19, 2024**, from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. ET – E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process – [Register](#).
- **September 24, 2024**, from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. ET – Eligible Services 101 – [Register](#).

### Rural Health Care

- **September 4, 2024**, at 2 p.m. ET – Invoicing Best Practices – [Register](#).
- **September 18, 2024**, at 2 p.m. ET – FY2024 FRN Touch Base – [Register](#).

### Lifeline

- **September 11, 2024**, at 3 p.m. ET – Account Management – [Register](#).
- **September 17, 2024**, at 4 p.m. ET – Tribal Teleconference Safe Connections Act Overview – [Register](#).

## USF Program Technical Assistance

The USAC Customer Service Center (CSC) provides customer service for all USF programs. Visit the [Contact USAC](#) page to get in touch with specialized agents trained to answer your program-specific questions.

### Questions or Suggestions?

If you have questions or suggestions about Tribal universal service support, you may contact USAC's Tribal Liaison, Gem Labarta, at [TribalLiaison@usac.org](mailto:TribalLiaison@usac.org).

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