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January 2025 Tribal Nation Newsletter

January 31, 2025 | Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)



Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program (T-LEAP)

New! Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program

With T-LEAP having been made permanent, Tribal libraries and Tribal college and university (TCU) libraries can now receive direct support in navigating the E-Rate application process, including one-on-one assistance in preparing applications, applying to the program, and receiving E-Rate support.

To learn more, please visit the [T-LEAP page](#) or contact the [USAC Tribal Liaison](#). Interested Tribal libraries can [sign up here](#) year-round.

Upcoming USAC Customer Service Center Closure

USAC and the E-Rate, Emergency Connectivity Fund, High Cost, Rural Health Care, Contributors, and Service Providers Customer Service Centers (CSCs) will be **closed** on Monday, February 17, 2025.

The Lifeline CSC will be **open** on Monday, February 17, 2025.

E-Rate

Preparing for the Funding Year (FY) 2025 Application Filing Window

The FCC Form 471 application filing window opened Wednesday, January 15, 2025, and will close Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. ET. Wednesday, February 26, 2025, is the last date that you can submit and certify an FCC Form 470 for FY2025 and still have time to wait the required minimum 28-day

period before submitting and certifying your FCC Form 471 before the filing window closes on March 26.

The FCC Forms 470 and 471 must be filed in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC). The dates and times above apply to the time the form is certified in EPC. If you complete all the required information on the FCC Form 471 before the deadline date but certify it after the deadline, the form filing will not be considered as timely and will be marked as out-of-window.

If you are a Tribal library that is interested in applying for E-Rate funding, please consider joining T-LEAP and receive one-to-one assistance on all phases of applying for and receiving E-Rate funding.

WCB Provides Relief for Program Participants Located in Disaster Areas Affected by California Wildfires

On January 16, the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) waived several E-Rate rules and deadlines, on a temporary basis, to provide relief to E-Rate participants located in areas of California that are affected by the spread of wildfires and straight-line winds (California Wildfires). See [DA 25-63](#).

Specifically, WCB extended the FY2025 FCC Form 471 application filing window deadline until September 26, 2025 for schools and libraries in the California wildfire disaster areas and directed USAC to treat those applications as filed on a timely basis. After the closure of the FY2025 FCC Form 471 application filing window on March 26, 2025, USAC will track out-of-window submissions of FCC Forms 471 that originate from entities located in affected disaster areas. Consistent with the order, USAC will move these applications to In-Window status. Applicants in the affected disaster areas will not need to request a waiver of the application filing window deadline from the FCC.

WCB also provided a 120-day invoice deadline extension for funding requests by entities located in the affected areas that have an invoice deadline that falls within 60 days of the release date of the order (i.e., between January 16, 2025 to March 17, 2025).

WCB also said that it would consider requests for specific relief to address individual circumstances of participants in the E-Rate, Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF), and Cybersecurity Pilot Program that are not addressed by this order as these participants respond to the crisis and assess damage to buildings.

FCC Form 471 Learning Module Available

USAC has created a learning module for [How to File the FCC Form 471](#), which guides users through all aspects of preparing, submitting, and certifying the form. Topics include how to submit Category One (C1) and Category Two (C2) funding requests.

FCC Form 471 Training Site Available

You can practice filling out an FCC Form 471 on USAC's EPC training site by [requesting a training account](#) for FCC Forms 470 and 471. There are four full-rights profiles available: independent school, independent library, school district, and library system. After we process your request for a training account, we will send an email with the appropriate username(s) and password(s) to access the system. You can then use the [Entity Profile Set-Up instructions](#) to set up your profile(s) and practice filling out the form.

FCC Form 470 Tools for Service Providers

Service providers seeking to provide E-Rate equipment and services can view filed FCC Forms 470 either through EPC or on the USAC website. EPC has a search and download function that allows service providers with accounts in EPC to search for certified FCC Forms 470, then download the form data as a set of CSV (comma separated value) files. Additional information can be found in the [FCC Form 470 Search User Guide](#). The [E-Rate FCC Form 470 Download Tool](#) also allows service providers to view and export FCC

Form 470 data found in EPC for FY2016 and onwards. The tool also allows service providers to download PDF versions of the FCC Form 470 and any request for proposal (RFP) attachments.

To learn more about E-Rate program updates and deadlines, please review the [Special Edition E-Rate News Brief](#).

Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program

On January 16, 2025, the FCC released a [Public Notice](#) announcing the schools, libraries, and consortia selected to participate in the Cybersecurity Pilot Program. The Pilot Program funding application filing window will run from March 18 – September 15, 2025.

Selected participants can begin the competitive bidding process once they received notice of their selection. Pilot participants can submit and certify their Pilot FCC Form 470 in the Cybersecurity Pilot Program Portal to start the required minimum 28-day competitive bidding window. After completing the competitive bidding process, participants can request Pilot Program funding using the Pilot FCC Form 471, which will also be available in the Cybersecurity Pilot Program Portal once the application filing window opens.

USAC will begin accepting funding requests when the application filing window opens on March 18, 2025, and continue accepting requests through the window close on September 15, 2025. September 15 is also the date by which Pilot participants must provide more detailed information about their cybersecurity experiences by completing Part 2 of the Pilot FCC Form 484. Please take note that the participants who fail to complete Part 2 of the FCC Form 484 are subject to removal from the Pilot Program.

To learn more about the Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program, visit E-Rate's [Learn](#) page. You can also visit the [FCC's Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program website](#) and [FAQ webpage](#). Additionally, USAC will offer robust training to help participants navigate the Pilot Program's competitive bidding, funding application, and reimbursement processes. Visit our [Webinars](#) section to register for upcoming webinars and view previous webinars.

Rural Health Care (RHC)

Important Deadlines and Reminders

The following are recommended dates to submit the FCC Forms 460, 461, and 465 with enough time to file funding requests (FCC Forms 462 and 466) before the end of the FY2025 filing window.

HCF & Telecom Program Form	Last Day to Submit for Individual HCPs Using an RFP
FCC Form 460 (Eligibility)	January 4, 2025 Recommended Date
FCC Form 461 & 465 (Request for Services)	February 1, 2025 Recommended Date
FCC Form 462 & 466 (Funding Request)	April 1, 2025 Deadline to Submit

HCF & Telecom Program Form	Last Day to Submit for Individual HCPs NOT Using an RFP
FCC Form 460 (Eligibility)	January 8, 2025 Recommended Date
FCC Form 461 & 465 (Request for Services)	February 10, 2025 Recommended Date

HCF & Telecom Program Form	Last Day to Submit for Individual HCPs NOT Using an RFP
FCC Form 462 & 466 (Funding Request)	April 1, 2025 Deadline to Submit

Please note that the FCC Forms 460, 461, and 465 submission dates are not mandatory deadlines per the program rules, but rather recommended key dates to ensure that the FCC Forms 461 and 465 are posted to USAC's website early enough for the required minimum 28-day competitive bidding period before the deadline to submit FCC Forms 462 and 466. If FCC Forms 461 and 465 are submitted with an RFP, allow at least an additional 10 days for review.

Upcoming Office Hours

To assist you with filing your FY2025 funding requests (FCC Forms 462 and 466), the RHC outreach team will be hosting the following webinars:

- FY2025 Telecom Program Office Hours – February 19, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- Consortium Best Practices Webinar – February 26, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- FY2025 HCF Program Office Hours – March 12, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- FY2025 Telecom Program Office Hours – March 19, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- FY2025 Service Provider Training – March 26, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

Hurricane Milton and Hurricane Helene Waivers

To learn about the [Hurricane Milton](#) and [Hurricane Helene](#) waivers, please review the [December 2024 Tribal Nation Newsletter](#).

Lifeline

Relief to Lifeline Participants Affected by the California Wildfires

On January 16, the FCC's WCB released an [Order](#) that temporarily waives the annual recertification requirements and de-enrollment for failed recertification under the Lifeline rules for households receiving **broadband-only** Lifeline service in Affected Disaster Areas. "Affected Disaster Areas" are defined as areas covered by the California Wildfires Event Declarations and any other Emergency Declarations or Major Disaster Declarations pertaining to the wildfires, including declarations issued related to these recent California Wildfires after release of this Order. If USAC has already conducted recertification outreach, USAC will not conduct de-enrollments for any subscriber who would have been de-enrolled, and was not actually de-enrolled, after January 13, 2025.

The waiver period under this order is through March 17, 2025. After this period, USAC will resume recertification efforts.

WCB also encourages the California Public Utilities (CPUC) to implement similar relief under the terms of this waiver for other Lifeline services that are not administered by USAC (qualifying bundled and voice-only services). As a reminder, California is an opt-out state, where USAC administers a broadband-only benefit. Visit the Lifeline [opt-out states](#) page for more information.

Reminder: FCC Form 555 Due January 31, 2025

The 2024 FCC Form 555 (Annual Lifeline Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Certification Form) is now available for completion in [One Portal](#) and is due on Friday, January 31, 2025 by 11:59 p.m. ET. This form is used for the annual recertification process and non-usage reporting for the Lifeline program. It must be

submitted electronically to USAC via USAC's [One Portal](#).

Service providers should reference the resources below for guidance on how to complete the form:

- December Lifeline Webinar: [FCC Form 555](#)
- Lifeline's [Annual Filings](#) page

If providers need assistance with their One Portal account, they can email CustomerSupport@usac.org.

Upcoming Webinars

- How to Manage the Lifeline Benefit – February 12, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET. – [Register](#).
- Navigating USAC Systems – March 12, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET. – [Register](#).

Key Dates and Trainings

E-Rate | Pre-Commitment Process (FCC Forms 470, 471, ESL, etc.) Q&A Session

Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 2 p.m. ET [Register >](#)

To view prior webinars, please visit the [E-Rate Webinars](#) page.

RHC | FY2025 Telecom Program Office Hours

Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET [Register >](#)

RHC | Consortium Best Practices Webinar

Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET [Register >](#)

RHC | FY2025 HCF Program Office Hours

Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET [Register >](#)

RHC | Telecom Program Office Hours

Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET [Register >](#)

RHC | FY2025 Service Provider Training

Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET [Register >](#)

Lifeline/ACP | How to Manage the Lifeline Benefit

Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET [Register >](#)

Lifeline/ACP | Navigating USAC Systems

Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET [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 in the specifics of each program.

Questions or suggestions? Contact USAC's Tribal Liaison at TribalLiaison@usac.org.

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