



E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process

September 19, 2024

Universal Service
Administrative Co.

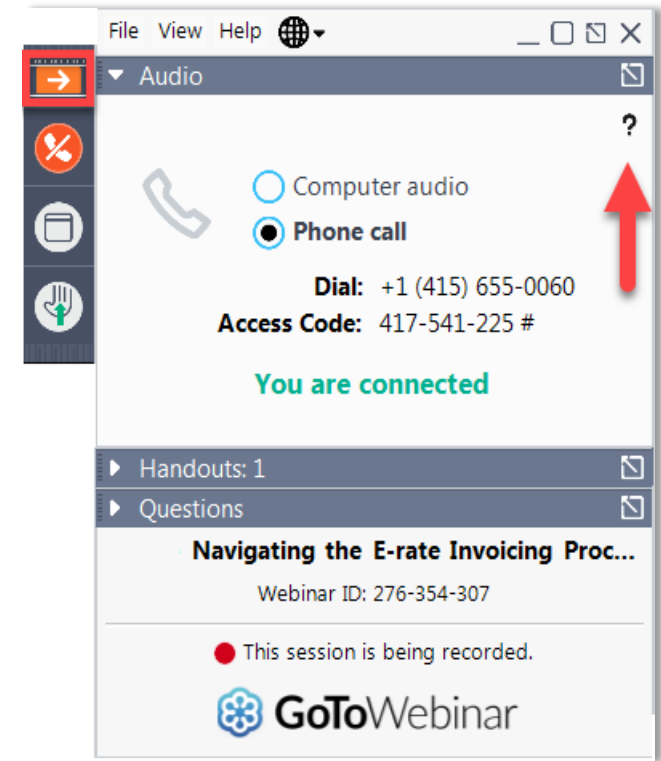
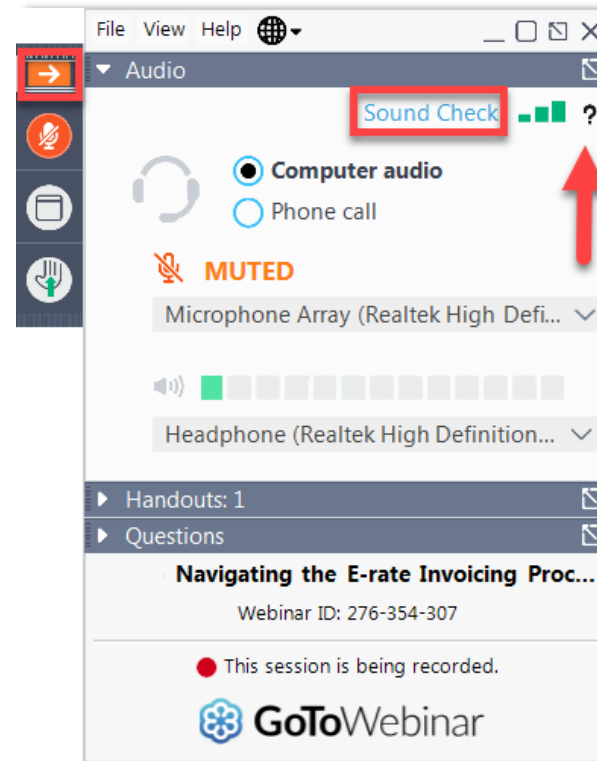
Housekeeping

- To accommodate all attendees, real-time closed captions will be present during this presentation. We apologize in advance for any transcription errors or distractions.
- Audio is available through your computer's speakers.
- The audience will remain on mute.
- Enter questions at any time using the "Questions" box.
- If your audio or slides freeze, restart the webinar.
- A copy of the slide deck is in the "Handouts" section of webinar panel.



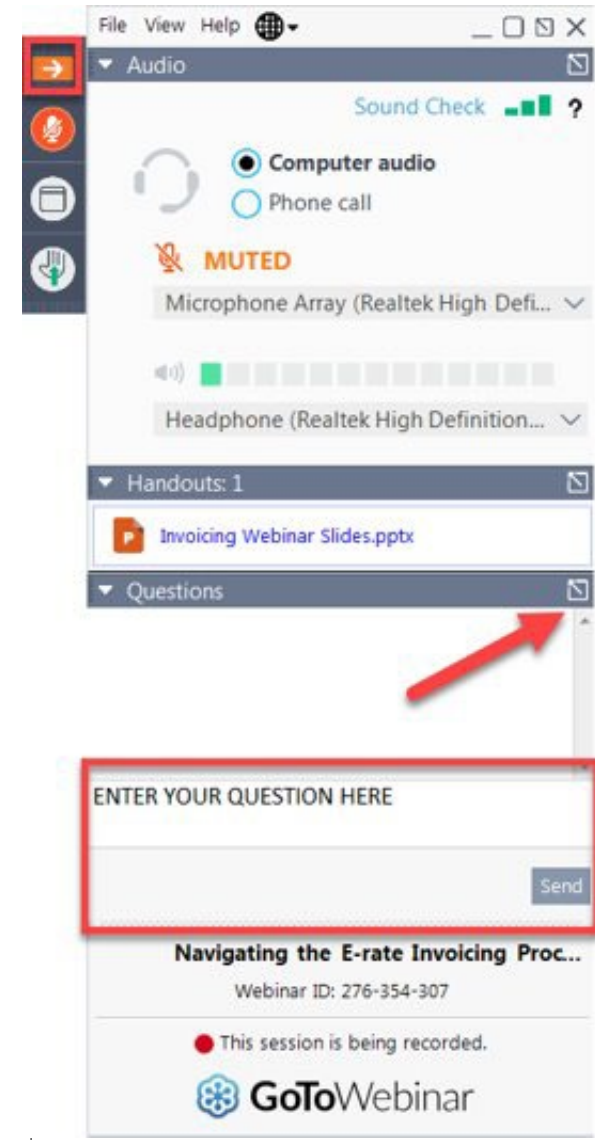
Housekeeping – Technical Issues

- Use the “Sound Check” link and click question mark icon for audio help.
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Housekeeping Q & A

- **There will be a live Q&A session focused on today's topics.**
- Tips for submitting questions:
 - Use the “Questions” box in your webinar control panel anytime during the presentation.
 - Click the box with the arrow above the questions box to expand it and see all written answers.
 - Write in full sentences.
 - Ask one question at a time.
 - Ask questions related to webinar content.



E-Rate Customer Service Center (CSC)



Call us at (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 in to EPC.
2. Select the **Contact Us** link from the upper right menu on the landing page.

Previous Fall Training Webinar

E-Rate Program Overview


- E-Rate Eligible Entities, Services, and Application Processes Overview



Available for Public Use

E-Rate Program Overview

2024 Applicant and Service Provider Training
September 16, 2024



E-Rate Fall Training Series 2024

- ✓ **E-Rate Program Overview: September 16, 2024**
- ✓ **Pre-Commitment: September 19, 2024**
- ☐ Eligible Services: September 24, 2024
- ☐ Category Two Budgets: October 17, 2024
- ☐ EPC Admin Window: October 24, 2024
- ☐ Post-Commitment: October 31, 2024
- ☐ Invoicing: November 7, 2024

- These webinars are suitable for all E-Rate experience levels; however, we recommend that those new to the program view these webinars in the order they are presented for the best learning experience.
- These webinars are recommended for both applicants and service providers, especially those new to E-Rate. A webinar tailored towards Service Providers was held in August 2024. Handouts and a recording of this webinar is available on the E-Rate [Webinars](#) page.
- Please visit the E-Rate [Webinars](#) page for additional information including course descriptions, registration links for future webinars, and access to recordings and handouts from previous webinars.

Learn

- E-Learning Modules
- Videos
- Webinars**
- Regional Trainings
- Tribal Training
- EPC/BEAR Training Sites
- FAQs

Webinars

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."

MEET THE TEAM



Jessie Stern

Communication Specialist | E-Rate



Shawn Jensen

Associate Program Manager | E-Rate



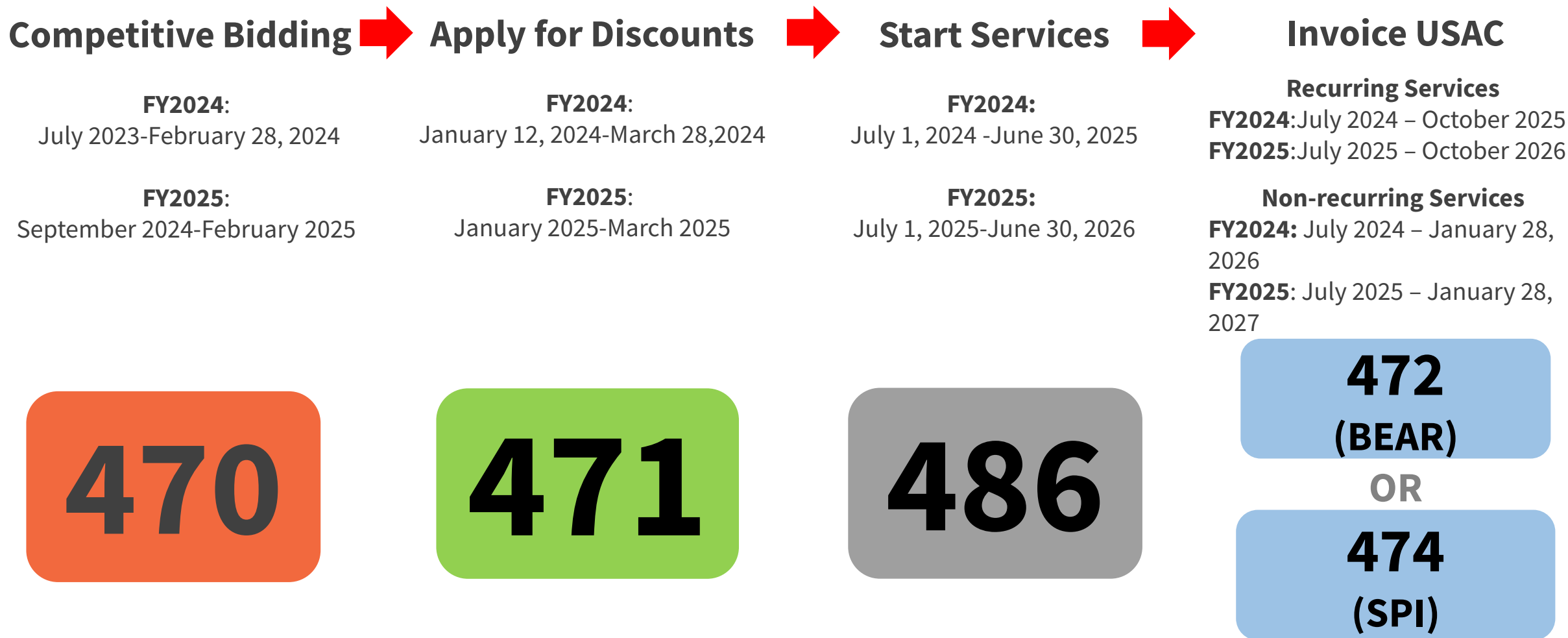
Lisette LaForge

Program Manager | E-Rate

Agenda

- Applicant Process
- Competitive Bidding (FCC Form 470)
- Step 2: Selecting Service Providers
- Requesting Funding (FCC Form 471)
- Program Compliance
- Q+A

Applicant Forms and Important Dates Reminder



* Date ranges shown reflect a typical timeline but are subject to change.

Applicant Process

Know Your Role

Applicants	Service Providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine services needed, file FCC Form 470 (and Request for Proposals (RFP), if desired). • Conduct competitive bidding process. • Select the most cost-effective bid. • Respond to Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review questions. • File other applicant forms (FCC Forms 471, 486, 472, 500, etc.). • Document compliance with FCC rules on an ongoing basis. • Retain documentation for at least 10 years from last date of service delivery or the end of the funding year, whichever date is later. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to FCC Form 470 and RFP. • May assist with responding to PIA questions on technical services (but not competitive bidding). • File service provider forms (FCC Forms 473, 474, etc.). • Document compliance with FCC rules on an ongoing basis. • Retain documentation for at least 10 years from last date of service delivery or the end of the funding year, whichever date is later. • Contribute to the Universal Service Fund, if required. See the Service Providers page on USAC's website.

Applicant Process - Overview

Pre-Commitment Steps

Request services
(FCC Form 470),
run a competitive bid
process, and select a
vendor

Request funding
(FCC Form 471)
and undergo
application review

Post-Commitment Steps

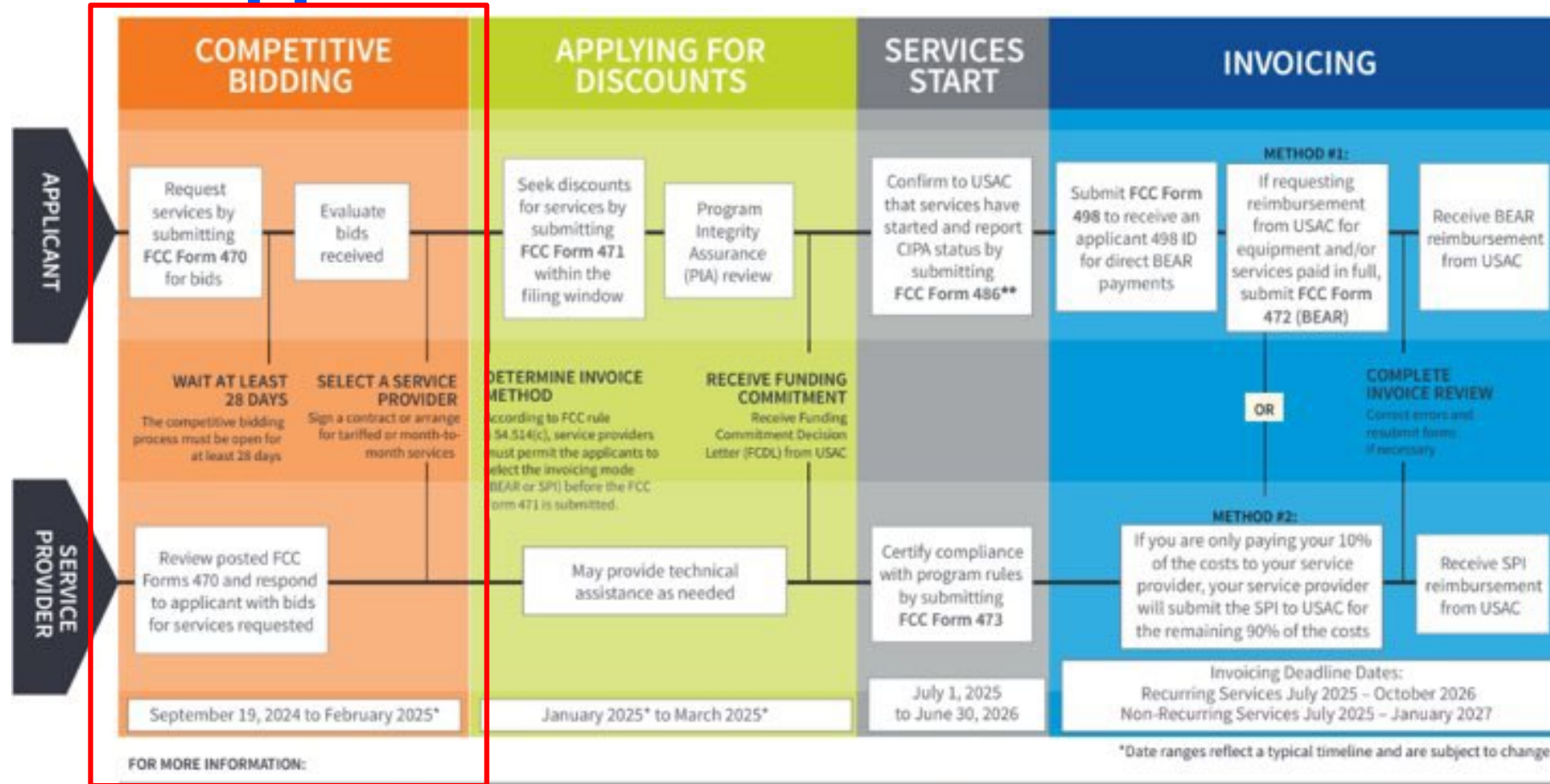
Confirm the start of
services and status of
Children's Internet
Protection Act
(CIPA) compliance
(FCC Form 486)

Request
reimbursements **(FCC
Form 472)**
OR receive discounts
(FCC Form 474)

- [E-Rate Program At a Glance for New Applicants](#)
- Call our Customer Service Center at (888) 203-8100 to set up an account in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) and make sure your school or library has a Billed Entity Number (BEN).

Competitive Bidding – FCC Form 470

The E-Rate Application Process



- Website: The application process is broken down in detail for both applicants and service providers on the Schools and Libraries Program website (www.usac.org/sl).
- Glossary of Terms: Definitions for program terms and acronyms.
- **Consortium members report their CIPA status by submitting the FCC Form 479 to their consortium leader. The consortium leader then files the FCC Form 486.
- To adjust funding commitments and/or modify the dates for receipt of services after the FCDL is issued, file the FCC Form 500.

What Is Competitive Bidding?

- Competitive bidding is the formal process for applicants to choose the service providers who will provide the requested equipment and services.
- Service providers review the applicant's FCC Form 470 for requested equipment and services, any procurement requirements, and then submit bids.
- During the competitive bidding process, applicants may decide not to participate in the E-Rate program.

THE COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS

allows applicants to identify and request products and/or services so that potential service providers can review those requests and submit bids for them.



The process consists of five steps:

- 1** Get Ready to File
 - Perform a needs assessment
 - Review your state and local procurement rules
 - Review the [Eligible Services List](#)
- 2** [File and certify an FCC Form 470](#)
 - Provide sufficient information for potential vendors to provide a comprehensive bid (e.g., for managed internal broadband services specify the exact equipment/services to be managed)
 - Potential bidders (service providers) cannot help you file FCC Form 470
 - You have the option to submit a Request for Proposals (RFP) with your form
 - There are [competitive bidding exemptions](#) for certain Category 1 and Category 2 (libraries only) equipment/services
 - After you certify your FCC Form 470, USAC issues a Receipt Notification Letter (RNL) with your Allowable Contract Date (ACD) – the earliest date you can enter into an agreement or sign a contract
- 3** Ensure an [open and fair process](#)
 - Provide any FCC Form 470, RFP and other information/updates in EPC for all potential bidders for at least 28 days
 - “Open” means there are no secrets in the process and that all bidders know what is required of them
 - “Fair” means that all bidders are treated the same and that no bidder has project information others do not
 - Abide by the [Gift Rules](#)
- 4** Wait **at least 28 days** before selecting a service provider
 - The ACD (included on your RNL) is 28 days after the FCC Form 470 is **certified**
 - The day you **certify** the FCC Form 470 is day 1. If the FCC Form 470 is certified on the 1st of the month, you may select a service provider **on or after** the 29th of the month
 - If you later **change the information** needed to respond to the bid, you must restart the 28 days
 - If you issue an RFP on a later date, you must restart the 28 days
 - * State or Local procurement rules may require a longer waiting period
- 5** [Select a service provider](#)
 - Select a service provider after your ACD and before certifying the FCC Form 471
 - Consider all responsive bids
 - Use a [Bid Evaluation Matrix](#)
 - Ensure price is the primary evaluation factor (highest weighted factor). Only the costs of eligible goods/services should be evaluated in this criterion
 - Enter into a legally binding agreement and document selection date (after the minimum 28-day waiting period)
 - Upload your legally binding agreements and contracts to EPC



Retain all [competitive bidding documentation](#), including the [Bid Evaluation Matrix](#), for ten years after the last day you receive services or the end of that funding year, using whichever date is later.



Publication Date: 8/28/2024

Available for Public Use

Exemptions to Competitive Bidding

- Commercially Available Business class Internet Option (CABIO) services are exempt if they meet all the following requirements:
 - **Commercially available:** Publicly available to non-residential customers in the same form and at the same rates that it is offered to schools or libraries.
 - **Low cost:** Total annual pre-discount cost for the service, including any one-time costs such as installation, does not exceed **\$3,600 per year per school or library**.
 - **High-speed:** The service must be at least 100 Mbps downstream and 10 Mbps upstream.
- As of Funding Year 2024, **libraries** requesting \$3,600 or less annually per library in Category 2 (C2) E-Rate equipment and services are exempt from competitive bidding requirements.

An applicant using a competitive bidding exemption should:

- Skip filing FCC Form 470.
- Create a contract record, if applicable (see video “[Creating a Contract Record for CABIO Services](#)”).
- File an FCC Form 471 funding application to request E-Rate support.

Plan Your Project

Plan the scope of your project and the equipment and services needed.

- Review any state or local competitive bidding and procurement (purchasing) requirements that apply to you.
- Review the [FY2025+ FCC Form 470 Services Guiding Statements Table](#) to assist with determining the services needed and being requested.
- Understand concepts of [Entity Eligibility](#) and [Service Eligibility](#).
 - Review the [Eligible Services List \(ESL\)](#) for the current funding year to see what equipment and services are eligible for E-Rate program funding.

Be Aware Of “Mixed Eligibility” Equipment/Services

- **Mixed eligibility** refers to equipment and services for which only a portion is eligible for discounts under the E-Rate program.
- In general, a [cost allocation](#), separating the eligible and ineligible costs, is required if an equipment or service:
 - Contains both eligible and ineligible components — for example, a data T1 circuit (eligible) that also has channels on the circuit dedicated to voice services (ineligible);
 - Is utilized for eligible and ineligible uses — for example, a server that is used for both caching (eligible) and video distribution (ineligible); or
 - Is delivered to both [eligible and ineligible locations](#) — for example, broadband service delivered to a school run by a church (eligible) and to the church office (ineligible).
- There is no single approved method to allocate eligible and ineligible costs. Your method must use tangible criteria that result in a reasonable allocation.

Competitive Bidding Tip

When unsure whether a service falls under one of two service types, you are allowed to request bids for **both** service types.

For example, if you are unsure whether a service falls under Internal Connections or Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections, you have the option to seek bids for both.



Reminder: USAC Does Not Pay for Duplicative Services

- **Duplicative services** are services that provide the same functionality for the same population in the same location during the same period of time. USAC cannot fund duplicative services.
- **Backup or redundant services** are services sought to reduce reliance on any single service provider's network during an outage and **are considered ineligible, duplicative services.**
- Services that provide necessary bandwidth requirements, such as multiple T-1 lines when appropriate for the population served and the services to be received, may not be considered as duplicative. However, the applicant must still evaluate and choose the most cost-effective option from the bids received.

Competitive Bidding Requirements

- Applicants must seek competitive bids for eligible equipment and services by [filing an FCC Form 470](#). USAC posts the FCC Form 470 on its public website. Service providers view the requests and will submit responsive bids to the applicants.
- Provide sufficient information for potential bidders to provide a comprehensive bid (e.g., for managed internal broadband services specify the exact equipment/services to be managed).
- FCC Forms 470 [must be posted for at least 28 days](#) on USAC's website before an applicant can [select a service provider](#) and enter [a binding agreement with them](#).
- Applicants must [carefully consider all bids received](#) and then select the most cost-effective service offering, using price as the **primary factor** in the bid selection. Other factors may be used in the bid evaluation process, but price of the eligible equipment and services must be weighed most heavily.

FY 2025 FCC Form 470 Updates (Available September 19, 2024)

- Adding "Mobile Service for Use on Buses"
 - Can be found under: "I seek bids for internet access and/or data transmission service."
- Adding "School Bus Wi-Fi Network Equipment"
 - Can be found under: "I seek bid for Category One network equipment or maintenance operations."
- Adding "I seek bids for wireless Internet services that can be delivered with a Wi-Fi hotspot for off-premises use."
 - Can be found under: "I seek bids for Internet access and/or data transmission service."
- Adding "I seek bids for Wi-Fi hotspots for off-premises use."
 - Can be found under: "I seek bids for Category One network equipment or maintenance and operations."
- To learn how to file the FCC Form 470 to request Wi-Fi on school buses or Wi-Fi hotspots for off-premises use, visit our [webpage](#) and view the [How to File an FCC Form 470 e-Learning Module & EPC User Guide](#).

FY 2025 FCC Form 470 Updates: Allowable Contract Date Changes

- RFP Upload
 - Allow users to upload an RFP document to any non-cancelled Form 470, even if that Form 470 did not originally have an RFP.
- Substantive Change Question/New Layout to RFP Upload Screen
 - New Yes/No question: Does this new RFP constitute a substantial change to your FCC Form 470?

The screenshot shows a web interface for adding an RFP to an FCC Form 470. The top navigation bar includes 'News', 'Tasks (70)', 'Records', 'Reports', and 'Actions'. The main heading is 'Add an RFP to FCC Form 470' for 'QC Smile School District - Used for Dashboard testing - Test ACD reset - Form #250000201 - Funding Year 2025'. Below this is an 'Upload RFP' section with explanatory text about the 28-day waiting period and a link to 'USAC.org'. A question asks if the new RFP constitutes a substantial change, with 'Yes' and 'No' radio button options. Further text explains the consequences of selecting 'Yes' and the risk of denial of funding if substantial changes are not waited for. At the bottom, there is an 'UPLOAD' button and a 'Drop file here' area. A section for 'Associate RFP to Service Request(s)' is partially visible, showing 'Category 1: Data Transmission and/or Internet Access'.

News Tasks (70) **Records** Reports Actions

Add an RFP to FCC Form 470

QC Smile School District - Used for Dashboard testing - Test ACD reset - Form #250000201 - Funding Year 2025

Upload RFP

Changes to the FCC Form 470, including uploading a new RFP document, may require applicants to restart the 28-day waiting period before selecting a service provider, signing a contract, or submitting and certifying an FCC Form 471. Ministerial or clerical errors, such as updating contact information, do not require a reset of the 28-day waiting period. However, changes that materially affect the competitive bidding process, such as changing the services or equipment being requested, do require restarting the 28-day waiting period.

If you are requesting bids for additional equipment, services, or recipients of service not included on the original FCC Form 470, you may need to file a new FCC Form 470.

Please review the [USAC.org](https://www.usac.fcc.gov) for additional guidance.


Does this new RFP constitute a substantial change to your FCC Form 470? *


Yes

No

If you select yes, the 28-day waiting period will reset, and the Allowable Contract Date on your FCC Form 470 will be updated accordingly. If the new Allowable Contract Date prevents you from certifying the FCC Form 471 before the application window closes, you must request a waiver from the Commission after certifying the FCC Form 471.

Uploading a new RFP document with substantial changes and not waiting the minimum 28 days may result in denial of funding.

Please add an RFP here  *

UPLOAD  Drop file here

Associate RFP to Service Request(s)

Category 1: Data Transmission and/or Internet Access

Please select the service request(s) that apply to the RFP uploaded above.

Allowable Contract Date (ACD) Changes (cont.)

- ACD Automatic Reset
 - When “Yes” is selected for substantial change question, the allowable contract date will automatically update to extend by 28 days.
 - Day of modification/new RFP is day 1. ACD on Summary screen will change to reflect new date.
- ACD Automatic Reset Validations
 - ACD cannot be reset if the FCC Form 470 is referenced on an FRN which is not cancelled. Error message will appear.
 - FCC Form 471 cannot be certified if an FRN is citing an FCC Form 470 whose ACD is in the future. Error message will appear.
 - If the offending FCC Form 470 is removed from the application, the FCC Form 471 can be certified.

Competitive Bidding – State/Tribal-Wide Contract Purchasing

- A [state master contract](#) is a contract that is competitively bid and put in place by a state government entity for use by an eligible entity. When competitively bidding the state master contract, a state/Tribal-wide agency can submit a statewide FCC Form 470 that applicants can reference if they are purchasing from the state master contract.
- Alternatively, if the state master contract **was not** competitively bid using an FCC Form 470, the applicant may file an FCC Form 470 and consider the state master contract as **one of the bids** received in their bid evaluation process.

Requesting Services: Requests for Proposals

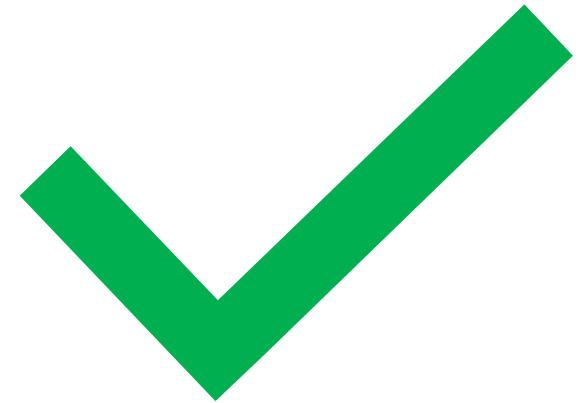
- A **Request for Proposals** (RFP) may be created to describe specific needs and circumstances in more detail.
- RFP documents are any documents that provide additional information to potential bidders on the scope or details of your project.
- For most service requests, RFPs are not required. However, you must issue an RFP for some requests if you are required to do so by state, Tribal, or local rules.
- Services on your **FCC Form 470 and RFP must match**.
- All RFPs and RFP documents must be attached to your FCC Form 470 in EPC.
- FCC Form 470 Upcoming Change: Allow users to upload an RFP document to any non-cancelled Form 470, even if that Form 470 did not originally have an RFP.

Avoid Common Competitive Bidding Errors

- Provide **sufficient information** for potential bidders to **provide a comprehensive bid** (e.g., for managed internal broadband services specify the exact equipment/services to be managed). Include all information needed on the FCC Form 470/RFP for potential vendors to provide a comprehensive bid.
- Ensure **price is the primary evaluation factor** (highest weighted factor). Only the costs of *eligible* equipment/services should be evaluated in this criterion.
- Potential bidders (i.e., service providers) cannot help you complete or file the FCC Form 470.
- Retain all necessary competitive bidding **documentation** for ten (10) years after the last day you receive services or the end of that funding year, whichever date is later.
 - [Document Retention List](#)
- Ensure that **all equipment/services you request on the FCC Form 471 is listed on the FCC Form 470/RFP** (including **all** bandwidth speeds).
 - Specifically for Internet Access/Data Transmission Services, applicants should ensure that speeds of services requested on the FCC Form 471 are reflected on the FCC Form 470/RFP.
- Select a service provider **after your allowable contract date and before certifying the FCC Form 471**.

Avoid Mistakes: Establish Your Contract Correctly

- The contract contains the **applicant's signature and date** of when the contract was executed.
- The legally binding agreement contains all the **material terms and conditions** and contains a **written acceptance of the offer**.
- The contract/legally binding agreement was **negotiated on or after the Allowable Contract Date** on the FCC Form 470.
- The contract/legally binding agreement was negotiated/executed **on or before the submission of the FCC Form 471**.



More Information on Competitive Bidding

For more information, see the following links:

- [Competitive Bidding Infographic](#)
- [FY2025+ FCC Form 470 Services Guiding Statements Table](#)
- [FCC Form 470 and Competitive Bidding User Guides e-Learning Module](#)
 - For information on how to file and certify an FCC Form 470 through the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC): see materials entitled **E-Rate Competitive Bidding Process** and the **How to File an FCC Form 470**
 - Service Providers: see **How to Search for FCC Forms 470 video** and [August 2024 Open Data Webinar](#)

Step 2: Selecting Service Providers

Abide by the Gift Rules

- [Receipt or solicitation of gifts](#) by applicants from service providers (and vice versa) is a competitive bidding violation.
- Service providers may not offer or provide any gifts or thing of value to applicant personnel involved in E-Rate.
- Gift prohibitions are always applicable – not just during the competitive bidding process.
- Exceptions for gifts – limited to items worth \$20 or less, including meals or prizes, and cannot exceed \$50 from one service provider to each individual per funding year.
- Watch our [Gift Rules video](#) for more details on the gift rules.

Create a Bid Evaluation Matrix

- To evaluate incoming bids, create a [bid evaluation matrix](#) or similar document.
- Develop evaluation criteria or factors to assess the bids.
 - You can have one or multiple factors.
 - You may also use disqualifying factors.
- Assign each evaluation factor a point value or percentage.
 - Ensure that **price is the primary evaluation factor**. The **cost** of the **eligible equipment and services** must be the **most heavily weighted factor**. Only the costs of *eligible* goods/services should be evaluated in this criterion.
 - Other factors can be considered, but they must be weighted less than the price of eligible equipment and services.

Sample Bid Evaluation Matrix

FACTOR	POINTS AVAILABLE	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3
Price of the eligible products and services	50*	20	50	40
Prior experience with the vendor	25	25	0	25
Prices for ineligible services, products, and fees	15	10	5	15
Local or in-state vendor	10	10	0	0
TOTAL	100	65	55	80

*This number must be higher than all other numbers in the same column.

28-Day Waiting Period Review and Reminders

Applicants must wait at least 28 days after certifying their [FCC Form 470](#) before selecting a service provider, executing any contracts for contracted services, or signing and submitting an [FCC Form 471](#). **The allowable contract date (ACD) is the earliest date on which an applicant can select a service provider by entering into a contract. See your Receipt Notification Letter for the specific ACD for your FCC Form 470.**

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 day you certify your FCC Form 470 is day 1. For example, if you certify the FCC Form 470 on 1/1/2025, you may select a service provider on or after the 29th of the month. If you make changes after certifying the FCC Form 470, you may be required to restart the 28-day waiting period.*
- **Do weekends count as a part of the 28 days?** *Yes, the minimum 28-day period is based on calendar days.*
- **When can you select a vendor?** *After the 28-day waiting period (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 certifying 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.*

Allowable Contract Date Infographic

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

Remember

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



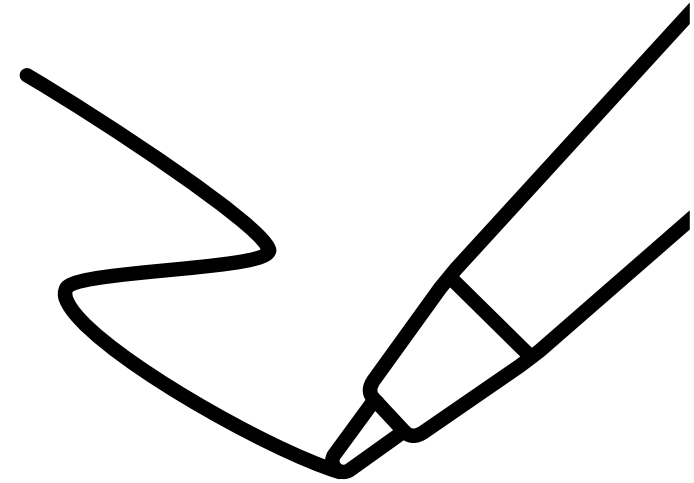
then applicants are **required** to accept all bids up until they conduct their bid evaluation.

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

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

What If You Receive No Bids?

- If applicants receive no bids or only one bid, they can:
 - Proactively solicit bids after waiting 28 days.
 - Ask their current provider to submit a bid.
 - Accept the one bid, if it is cost effective.
- Be sure to create a memo for your E-Rate files to document the situation.



Contracts

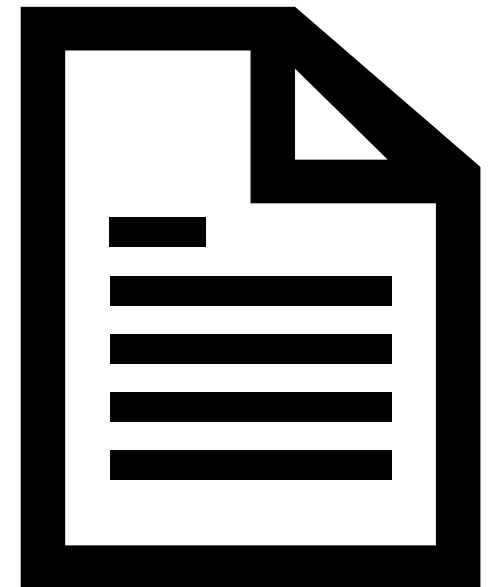
- Applicants must have a signed [contract](#) or other legally binding agreement in place prior to submitting their FCC Forms 471 to USAC.
- Applicant must not sign a contract before the ACD on their FCC Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter (RNL), which is 28 days after the FCC Form 470 is certified.
- Signed contracts constitute the best evidence that a legally binding agreement exists.
- A verbal offer or acceptance will not be considered evidence of the existence of a legally binding agreement.
- Upload your legally binding agreements and contracts to EPC.
- Learn more on the [State Master Contracts](#) webpage.
- **Resource**
 - **Instructional Video:** [How to Create a Contract Record](#) (5:58 mins)
 - [How to Create a Contract for Low Cost High Speed Internet](#) (4:55 mins)

Review Resource for Selecting Service Providers

- [Selecting Service Providers](#) webpage
- Review the [How to Construct an Evaluation Matrix](#) webpage
- **Reminder**
 - Your [FCC Form 470](#) and your request for proposal (if applicable) both have been publicly available for the same [28-day period](#) before you can close your competitive bidding process.
 - Once you have chosen your service provider(s) and signed a contract (if applicable), you can file an FCC Form 471 to apply for funding as soon as the [FCC Form 471](#) application filing window opens.
 - Document Retention
 - You must keep all [documentation](#) for at least 10 years from the last date to receive service or the end of the funding year, whichever is later.
 - For multi-year contracts, this means 10 years from the contract expiration date.

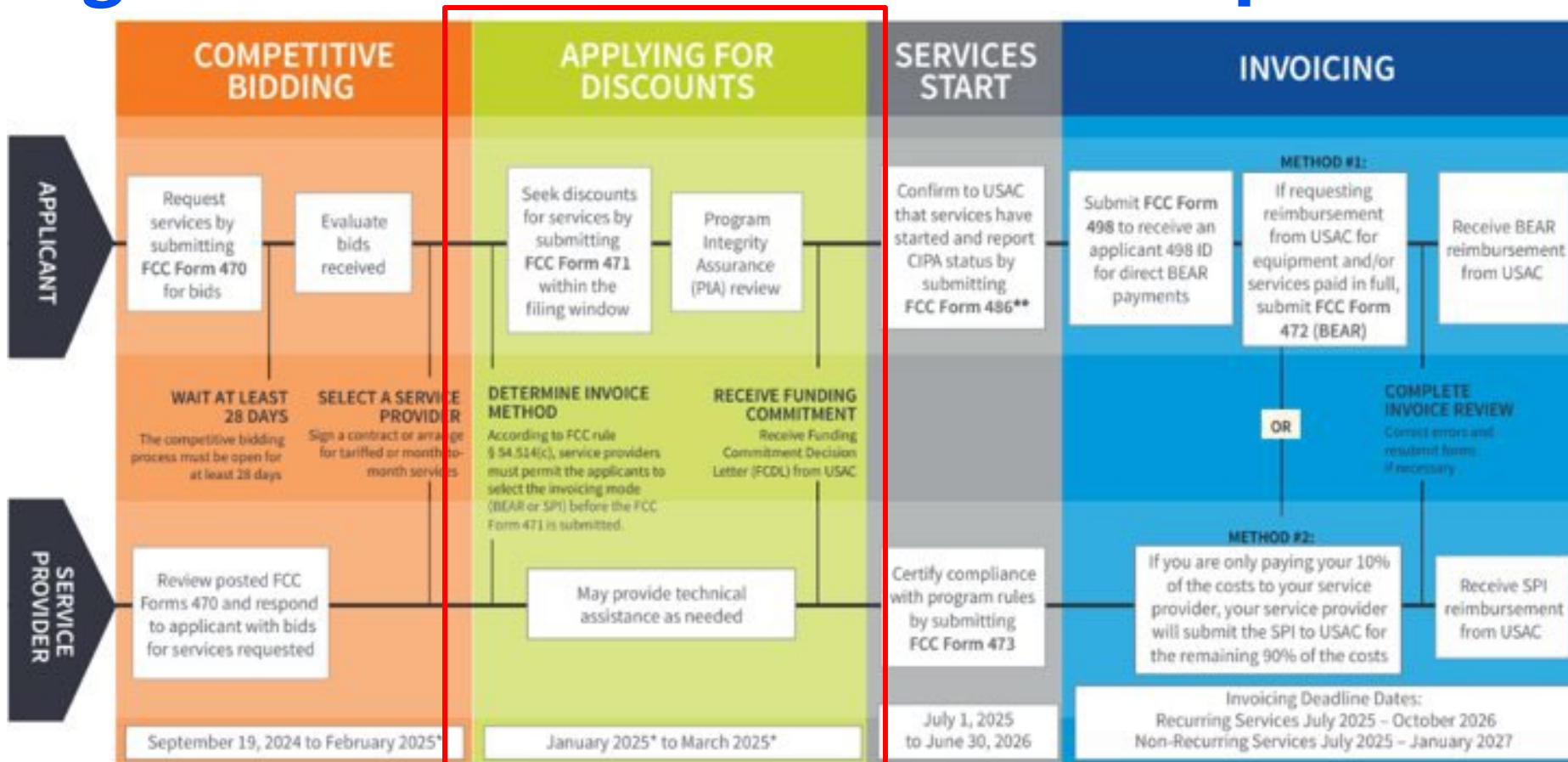
FCC Form 470 Review:

- Get Ready to File.
 - Review your State and Local Procurement Rules.
 - Review the E-Rate [Eligible Services](#).
- File and certify an FCC Form 470,
 - USAC acknowledges receipt of your form with a Receipt Notification Letter.
- Ensure an Open and Fair Competitive Bid Process.
 - Treat all bidders and potential bidders the same throughout the entire process.
 - Abide by FCC's Gift Rules.
- Wait at least 28 days.
- Select a Service Provider.
 - Use a Bidding Evaluation Matrix.
 - Price must be the primary factor.
 - Enter into a legally binding agreement or contract.
- For more information, see our [Competitive Bidding Infographic](#).



Requesting Funding – FCC Form 471

Applying for Discounts is the Second Step



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Website: The application process is broken down in detail for both applicants and service providers on the Schools and Libraries Program website (www.usac.org/sl).
- Glossary of Terms: Definitions for program terms and acronyms.
- **Consortium members report their CIPA status by submitting the FCC Form 479 to their consortium leader. The consortium leader then files the FCC Form 486.
- To adjust funding commitments and/or modify the dates for receipt of services after the FCDL is issued, file the FCC Form 500.

FCC Form 471 Overview

- Applicants file an [FCC Form 471](#) (Description of Services Ordered and Certification Form) to request funding for eligible services and equipment for the upcoming funding year.
- Applicants must:
 - Include information on the recipients of services and service provider(s);
 - Provide detailed descriptions of services including costs and dates of service and/or the requested equipment; and
 - Certify compliance with program rules.
- The filing window for the FCC Form 471 – generally opens in **mid-January** and **closes in mid-March**.
- FY 2025 Filing Window will close in **mid-March 2025**.
- You can file FCC Form 471 after you have completed your competitive bidding process (FCC Form 470), waited 28 days, selected your vendor(s), and signed contract(s) (if appropriate).

Before You File – Update Your EPC Profile

- New applicant: Create an account in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC)
- Returning applicant: Update your EPC account information during the **Administrative Window** (between October and mid January)
 - Verify the accuracy of the information in EPC. **USAC automatically updates profile information to match information on the most recently filed FCC Form 471.** These updates impact Student Count, National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and Community Eligibility Program (CEP) numbers, and library square footage.
- Tribal applicant: Check the [Tribal](#) box in your EPC entity profile and indicate your Tribal affiliation.
 - [Tribal College and University \(TCU\) libraries](#) are eligible as of Funding Year 2024 if they serve as a public library for their community.
- During the **Application Filing window**, any changes to your EPC profile that would impact your discount will be prohibited. EPC is “locked” to changes at this point.

Your FCC Form 470 and FCC Form 471 Must Match

Your FCC Form 471 must only request equipment and services cited from the FCC Form 470.

Applicants should ensure that all equipment/services being requested on the FCC Form 471 were competitively bid via the FCC Form 470.

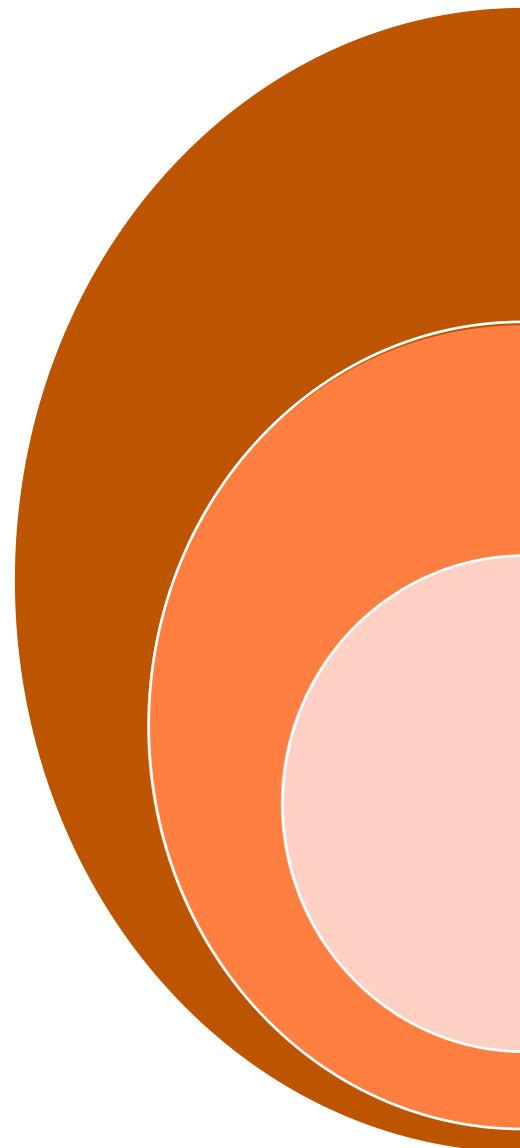
If you bid for two Category Two (C2) service types on your FCC Form 470 and invoice USAC for three C2 service types, this implies that additional information, other than what was competitively bid for, may have influenced the selection of service provider.

- This discrepancy cannot be corrected after competitive bidding ends.
- **You are allowed to select all three service types on your FCC Form 470 if you are unsure of what service types will be provided.**
- To avoid a competitive bidding violation, if there is time before the FCC Form 471 deadline, you would need to recertify a new FCC Form 470 with the additional service type, wait an additional 28 days, and select a service provider **after** the updated 28th day.

E-Rate FCC Form 471 Application Terms

- **Application Number** – A unique number that USAC assigns to each FCC Form 471. Each BEN can have one or more applications. C1 and C2 services must be on different applications. BENs applying for both categories of service will need at least two applications.
- **Funding Request Number (FRN)** - A unique number that USAC assigns to each funding request in an FCC Form 471. Each FCC Form 471 application can have one or multiple FRNs.
 - Each FRN must have all of the following information in common: BEN, contact information, category of service (C1 or C2), Service type (Data Transmission and/or Internet Access, Internal Connections, BMIC, Managed Internal Broadband Services), FCC Form 470, Service Provider (SPIN), contract (if you have one), dates of service, recipients of service
- **FRN Line Item** - A unique number assigned to each Line Item within the FRN, beginning with the funding request number. For example, the first line item within FRN 2399059243 would be number 2399059243.001. Each FRN can have one or multiple line items.
 - Each FRN Line Item must have the following information in common: Equipment or service, rates and quantities.

Relationship Between Unique Numbers



Choose Category 1 or 2	C1 or C2 are filed on separate FCC Form 471s.
Application Number FCC Form 471	Each FCC Form 471 is assigned a unique number.
Funding Request Number (FRN) Each FCC Form 471 can have one or multiple FRNs	Each FRN must have all of the following information in common: Billed entity number (BEN), contact information, category of service (C1 or C2), service type (data transmission and/or internet access, internal connections, BMIC, managed internal broadband services), FCC Form 470, service provider (SPIN), purchase type (contract, month-to-month, tariff), contract ID (if you have one), service start and end dates.
FRN Line Item	Each FRN Line Item must have all of the following information in common: Equipment or service, rates and quantities, and ROS. Each may have unique or overlapping recipients of service (ROS). Duplicative or redundant services are ineligible.

E-Rate FCC Form 471 Application FAQs

- What is the specific equipment or service, and which category does it fall under?
 - C1: Data Transmission and/or Internet Access, Bus Wi-Fi, Hotspot Equipment and Services
 - C2: Internal Connections, Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC), or Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS)
 - If you are requesting both C1 and C2 services, you will need to put these requests on different FCC Form 471 applications.
 - C1 requests for hotspots and bus Wi-Fi must also be on a separate application.
- Is this a contracted or month-to-month service? Are there multiple contracts?
 - Services under different contracts, or services provided on a month-to-month basis, must be under different FRNs.
 - If services are being provided by multiple service providers, then separate FRNs must be created.
- What is the exact type of equipment or connection being requested?
 - C1 Example: Fiber Ethernet vs Copper Cable Modem
 - Since both fall under Data Transmission/Internet Access, they may be able to share an FRN using separate line items.
 - C2 Example: Switch vs a License providing basic maintenance services
 - Since these are separate service types (i.e., internal connections and basic maintenance of internal connections), they require separate FRNs.
- Are the start date or end date of services different?
 - If either are different, different FRNs must be created.

Common FCC Form 471 Application Errors

- **Not correctly classifying the category of service or equipment/service type on the FCC Form 470**
 - Determine the equipment/services you need and contact the CSC to verify correct classification of equipment and services.
 - Competitively bid for all necessary equipment and service types by filing an accurate FCC Form 470 that accurately describes the equipment and service(s).
- **Filing an inaccurate Funding Request Number (FRN) with the wrong equipment or service type**
 - Work with your service provider to ensure that equipment and services are accurately represented on the FCC Form 471.
 - Contact the CSC or your Program Integrity Assurance reviewer with any questions.
- **Failing to remove ineligible services and equipment**
 - Work with your service provider to determine whether your requested equipment and services is 100% eligible.
 - Remove any ineligible amounts when creating your FRN(s).

Eligible Software: Key Reminders

- Software can fall into two **Categories of Service**.
- Commitments for different types of software can be for different term lengths.
 - Right-to-Use Licenses Purchased with Internal Connections – **All years** of the license contract can be billed in a single funding year.
 - For a 3-year contract for 100% eligible licenses at a pre- discounted amount of \$12,000, the full amount of \$12,000 could be entered into a single funding request number (FRN) for that funding year.
 - Software updates are considered basic maintenance of internal connections (BMIC) – Only the **current year** of service can be included in a single funding year, and multi-year software contract amounts must be prorated.
 - For a 3-year contract for 100% eligible BMIC services at a total pre-discounted amount of \$12,000, the FRN could only reflect a single year of expenses, or \$4,000, in a **single funding year**. BMIC services can only be invoiced after they are actually provided/ performed.

How to File FCC Form 471

- After you have selected a service provider and made sure that your profile contains the most accurate data, gather information you will need to file your FCC Form 471 (see [FCC Form 471 Checklist](#))
- File FCC Form 471 through the E-Rate Productivity Center
- For more information on the FCC Form 471 application process, see USAC's website.

**Apply for
Discounts
471**

FY 2025 Dates

January 2025

To

March 2025

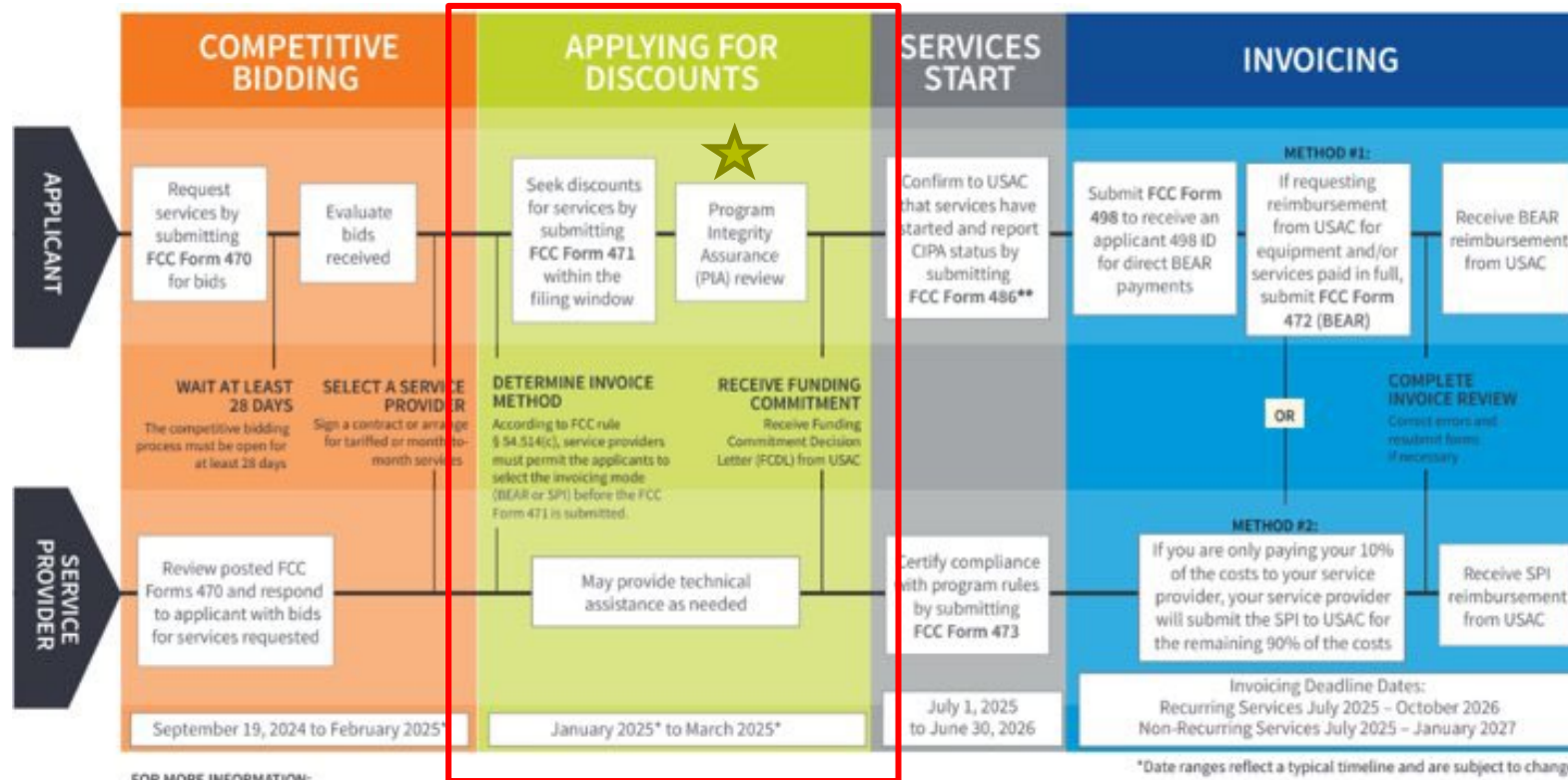
“Out of Window” Applications

- In FY 2024, if you had certified your FCC Form 470 after **February 27, 2024**, you would still have needed to wait 28 days and select your Service Provider before certifying FCC Form 471.
- You would not have been able to certify your FCC Form 471 before the filing window closed on March 27.
- In this situation, **file and certify the FCC Form 471 as soon as you have waited 28 days and selected the most cost-effective service offerings**. You will then need to file a waiver request with the FCC. Basic instructions for filing the FCC Window Waiver Requests are on the [FCC Form 471 Filing](#) page.

Program Compliance

Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) Review

After applicants certify an FCC Form 471 within the filing window, PIA reviewers check the information on the form for completeness and accuracy.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Website: The application process is broken down in detail for both applicants and service providers on the Schools and Libraries Program website (www.usac.org/sl).
- [Glossary of Terms](#): Definitions for program terms and acronyms.
- **Consortium members report their CIPA status by submitting the [FCC Form 479](#) to their consortium leader. The consortium leader then files the FCC Form 486.
- To adjust funding commitments and/or modify the dates for receipt of services after the FCDL is issued, file the [FCC Form 500](#).

Before Your PIA Review – Review Your FCC Form 471

- After certifying your FCC Form 471, and while you are waiting for your Program Integrity Assurance review, there are some areas you should double-check for accuracy.
- If you find any information that should be corrected or updated, you can submit a [Receipt Acknowledgment Letter \(RAL\) Modification Request](#).



Funding Commitment Decision Letter

- After the Program Integrity Assurance review process has been completed, USAC issues a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) containing USAC's decisions on your funding requests.
- You can find this decision in the Newsfeed in your organization's EPC account.
- You should review this decision carefully, as it contains important information both for planning to start services and for completing the additional steps in the application process.
- If you disagree with one or more of the decisions in your FCDL, you can [appeal](#) to USAC.

If an Item is Misclassified on Your FCC Form 471

After you receive your Funding Commitment Decision Letter, you may realize that a prepaid SKU (for example) was incorrectly classified as **Internal Connections** and should be classified as **BMIC**. The actions you take to remediate depend on the details.

- If you realize the error before the 60-day appeal period, file an appeal with USAC.
- If you realize the error after the 60-day appeal period, file a waiver of the appeal-filing deadline with the FCC.
- If the FCC Form 470 does not contain the category the item should be listed under, it must be re-filed.

Protecting the USF and E-Rate Program

- As we focus on preventing fraud, waste, and abuse, **it is extremely important to take document retention seriously, ensure compliance with program rules, and avoid the appearance of fraudulent activity.**
- Beneficiaries must comply with program rules and provide USAC, as well as the FCC, with full and correct information, upon request.
- E-Rate is a federal program established by the FCC under 47 C.F.R. Part 54.
- Violations of E-Rate program rules, certifications, and/or the United States Code (U.S.C.) are subject to criminal prosecution and financial recovery.
- In our role as stewards of the E-Rate program, USAC must:
 - Process and evaluate information received from program participants and universal service fund contributors.
 - Conduct [audits](#) to ensure that funds are being used properly.
 - Support investigations by law enforcement for E-Rate and USF.

Document Retention

- Applicants and service providers are required to [retain documentation](#) that demonstrates compliance with the statutory or regulatory requirements for all E-Rate program purchases of equipment and services **for a period of 10 years** after the last day of service delivery or end of the funding year, whichever date is later.
 - For example, for recurring internet access service for FY2023, both the applicant and the service provider must retain all records until at least June 30, 2034.
- Keep all records such as:
 - RFP documents
 - Winning and losing bids
 - Vendor correspondence
 - Evaluation matrices
 - Documentation and memos of zero or one bid received (if applicable)
 - Other competitive bidding documentation
 - Asset and Service Inventories
- Records can be kept electronically: Use file names and folder names that are specific and descriptive to help you locate them more easily.
- The [Document Retention List](#) is available in the Resources section of the USAC website.

Additional Resources

- [FCC Form 470 Filing page](#)
- [FCC Form 470 User Guide and e-Learning Modules](#)
- [FCC Form 470 Download Tool \(FY2016+\)](#)
- [FCC Form 470 and Competitive Bidding Webinar](#)
- [Open Data Overview Webinar](#)
- [Competitive Bidding FAQs](#)
- [FCC Form 471 Filing page](#)
- [FCC Form 471 e-Learning Modules](#)
- [FCC Form 471 Download Tool](#)
- [FCC Form 471 Submission Checklist](#)



Live Q&A

- Submit your questions about today's topics:
 - Competitive Bidding
 - Requesting Bids
 - File and Certify an FCC Form 470
 - Open and Fair Process
 - 28-Day Waiting Period
 - Select a Service Provider
 - The Service Provider's Role

The screenshot shows a GoToWebinar control panel. At the top, there's a menu with 'File', 'View', and 'Help'. Below that is an 'Audio' section with a 'Sound Check' indicator. The audio is set to 'Computer audio' and is currently 'MUTED'. The microphone is identified as 'Microphone Array (Realtek High Defi...'. Below the audio section is a 'Handouts: 1' section with a file named 'Invoicing Webinar Slides.pptx'. At the bottom, there is a 'Questions' section with a text input field containing 'ENTER YOUR QUESTION HERE' and a 'Send' button. A red arrow points to the 'Questions' section, and a red box highlights the 'Send' button.

Q&A Tips

- ✓ Type your queries into the “Questions” box in your webinar control panel.
- ✓ Write in full sentences.
- ✓ Ask one question at a time.
- ✓ Click the box with the arrow above the questions box to expand it and see all the written answers.

Questions?

E-Rate Customer Service Center (CSC)



Call us at (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 in to EPC.
2. Select the **Contact Us** link from the upper right menu on the landing page.

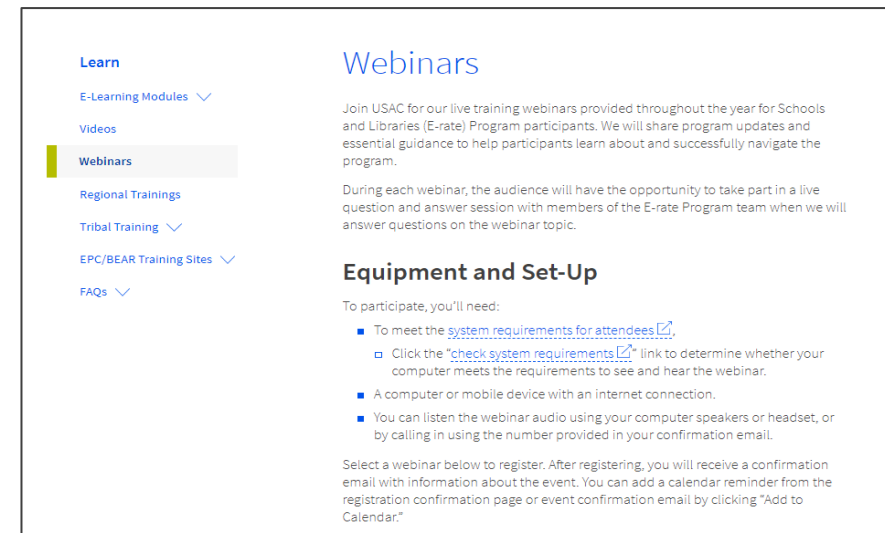
Upcoming Webinars

**Our next webinar is on:
September 24 at 2 p.m. ET**

Eligible Services 101

Recommended for: Applicants and
service providers

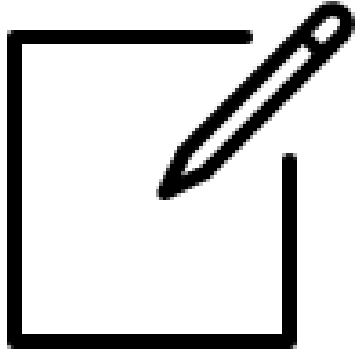
E-Rate Experience Level: All



The screenshot shows a webpage with a navigation menu on the left and a main content area on the right. The navigation menu includes: Learn, E-Learning Modules (with a dropdown arrow), Videos, Webinars (highlighted with a yellow bar), Regional Trainings, Tribal Training (with a dropdown arrow), EPC/BEAR Training Sites (with a dropdown arrow), and FAQs (with a dropdown arrow). The main content area has a heading "Webinars" and a paragraph: "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." Below this is another paragraph: "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." A section titled "Equipment and Set-Up" follows, with the text "To participate, you'll need:" and a bulleted list: "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." At the bottom of the main content area, it says: "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!





Universal Service
Administrative Co.