



Newly Eligible E-Rate Equipment & Services: Wi-Fi Hotspot Order (FCC 24-76)

August 15, 2024

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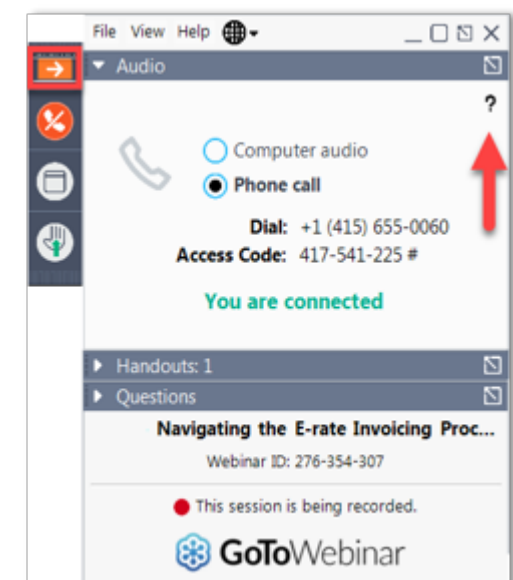
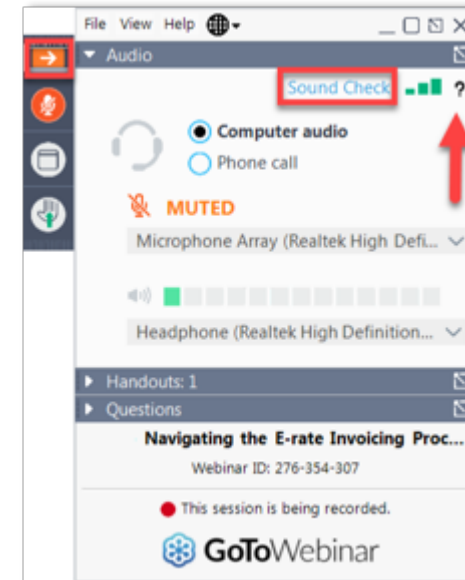


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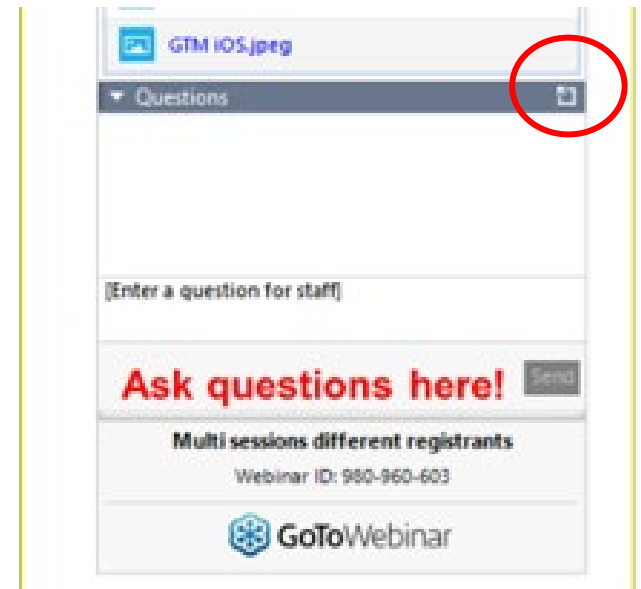
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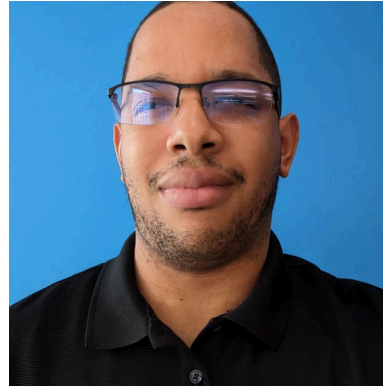
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Catherine Willis

Senior Director | E-Rate



Derrick Harrison

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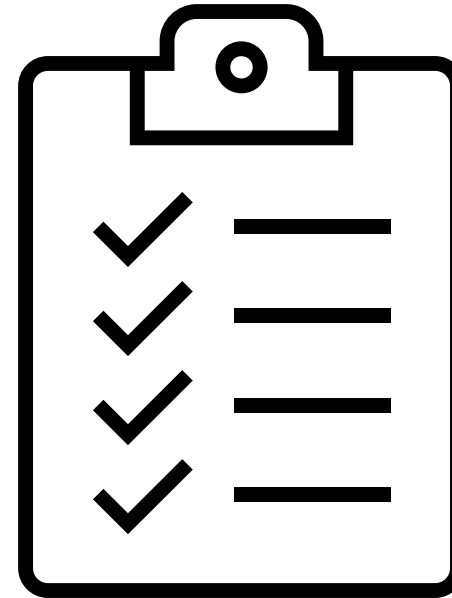


Bernie Manns

Senior Director | E-Rate

Agenda

- Wi-Fi Hotspots: Now E-Rate Eligible
- Budget and Funding
- Requirements
- Usage
- Additional Information
- Q & A



Wi-Fi Hotspots: Now E-Rate Eligible

Wi-Fi Hotspots: E-Rate Eligible

- On July 18, 2024, the FCC adopted a Report and Order ([\[FCC 24-76\]](#)) making **Wi-Fi hotspots and mobile wireless Internet services for off-premises use** eligible for E-Rate program support.
- This will allow eligible schools and libraries to start **Wi-Fi hotspot lending programs** so that their students, school staff, and library patrons with need can check out E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi hotspots and services to engage in remote learning.
- Accordingly, the FCC adopted certain limitations, including funding caps per device/service and budgets entities, to ensure Wi-Fi hotspots are more effectively targeted to those with the greatest need.

Wi-Fi Hotspots: E-Rate Eligible

- **Wi-Fi hotspot:** a device that is intended to **provide Wi-Fi connectivity to a hotspot user as its sole function.**
- Wi-Fi hotspots will be **eligible as Category One (C1) network equipment** necessary to make C1 wireless Internet services functional.
 - Once released, can be found on the FY2025 FCC Form 470 under “I seek bids for internet access and/or data transmission service” and “I seek bids for Category One network equipment or maintenance and operations.”
- Wi-Fi hotspot funding requests limited to fixed, **three-year budget cycle.** First cycle funding years (FY) 2025 – FY 2027.
- Off-premises equipment and services requests will be prioritized *after* on-premises Category 1 and 2 equipment and service requests.

Eligible Equipment and Services

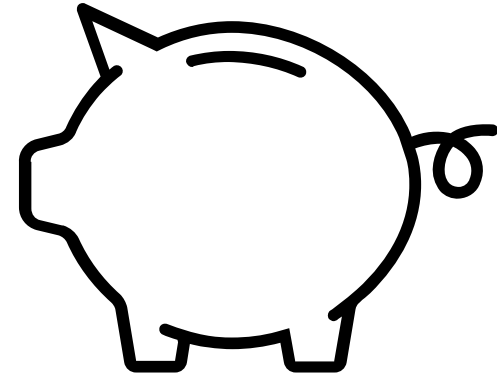
- **To be E-Rate eligible**, Wi-Fi hotspots **must**:
 - Be portable.
 - Be a single device (i.e., not a set of linked devices).
 - Be for use with a commercially available mobile wireless Internet service.
- **What is NOT eligible** for E-Rate funding:
 - Multi-functional devices (e.g., smartphones, PCs, notebooks, tablets, customer premises equipment, routers or switches, and wireless access points, etc.).
 - Wireless services delivered to any broadband-enabled end user devices (e.g., laptops, tablets), fixed wireless connections and the related equipment, private 5G/LTE networks, fiber, and network expansion or construction.
- In addition, 1:1 Wi-Fi hotspot initiatives are not allowed, and each Wi-Fi hotspot must have an associated line of service to be eligible for E-Rate funding. Wi-Fi hotspots may not be warehoused/stored for future use or as replacements for lost, damaged, or stolen Wi-Fi hotspot devices.



Wi-Fi Hotspot Budget and Funding Caps

Funding Caps: Devices & Internet Access Service Plans

- Maximum costs on the per unit cost of Wi-Fi hotspot devices and Internet access plans purchased through E-Rate.
- Pre-discount cost limitations (caps):
 - Recurring wireless Internet service: \$15/month
 - Wi-Fi hotspot: \$90/device
- **Taxes are not included in the capped amounts.**
- **Activation and configuration costs are included in the capped amounts.**
- All taxes and fees should be requested on separate funding request line items and separately identified on invoices.
- Applicants are permitted to select a Wi-Fi hotspot or service that costs more than the funding caps, but **E-Rate commitment amounts will not exceed the funding caps.**
- As with all other E-Rate services, billed rates must not exceed the contracted rates and USAC will only pay up to the committed and contracted rate.



Calculating Wi-Fi Hotspot Budget: FY 2025-FY 2027

- The budget is the maximum amount of pre-discount funding permitted for Wi-Fi hotspots and/or service over three funding years.
- ***Independent School or District Budget = [student count x (20 hotspots/100 students) x C1 discount rate] x \$630***
 - Calculate Wi-Fi hotspot and service budgets by **multiplying student count by 20%** (i.e., 20 hotspots per 100 students) **and multiply by the C1 discount rate. This number is rounded up to the nearest ten.** The applicant then **multiplies that rounded number by \$630** to determine the three-year pre-discount budget.
- ***Library or Library System Budget = [square feet x (5.5 hotspots/1000 sq ft) x C1 discount rate] x \$630***
 - Calculate Wi-Fi hotspots and service budgets **multiplying square footage, allowing 5.5 devices per 1,000 square feet, and multiply that by the C1 discount rate. This number is rounded up to the nearest ten.** The applicant then **multiplies that rounded number by \$630** to determine the three-year pre-discount budget.

Calculating Hotspot Budget Examples

***Remember to round up to the nearest 10 when multiplying the bracketed elements**

School or School District		
Students	Discount Rate	Hotspot Budget (FY25-27)
500	40%	\$25,200 [500 students x (20 hotspots/100 students) x 0.4] x \$630 = \$25,200
500	90%	\$56,700 [500 students x (20 hotspots/100 students) x 0.9] x \$630 = \$56,700

Library or Library System		
Square Footage	Discount Rate	Hotspot Budget (FY25-27)
10,000	90%	\$31,500 [10,000 square feet x (5.5 hotspots/1000 square feet) x 0.9] x \$630 = \$31,500
100,000	90%	\$315,000 [100,000 square feet x (5.5 hotspots/1000 square feet) x 0.9] x \$630 = \$315,000

Three-Year Budget Cycle

- Fixed three-year budget cycles, beginning with funding years 2025 through 2027, after which the budgets will reset.
- The Wi-Fi hotspot budget represents the **maximum pre-discount amount** an applicant may request across three funding years, rather than an allocation of funding for Wi-Fi hotspots and service lines for which an applicant is entitled reimbursement.
- Entities are allowed to spread out their requests for Wi-Fi hotspots and services over the three-year timeframe, but the total pre-discount amount cannot exceed the budget over the three funding years.
- **Applicants may not request more than 45% of its three-year budget in any one year.**

Requirements

Acceptable Use Policies

- FCC requires applicants to maintain/update their **acceptable use policies (AUPs)** to clearly state that **off-premises use** must be **primarily for an educational purpose**.
 - **For schools:** AUP must state that the use must be “*integral, immediate, and proximate to the education of students.*”
 - **For libraries:** AUP must state that the use must be “*integral, immediate, and proximate to the provision of library services to library patrons.*”
- Applicants must provide public notice and post updated AUP.
- Applicants will be required to certify on the FCC Form 486 that the above requirements have been met, and to be able to provide documentation demonstrating compliance, if requested.
- Applicants **are not required to collect signed documentation** of user compliance with these policies.
- Schools and libraries are also expected to implement content and user network restrictions consistent with the restrictions that they place on their building-based networks, and to adopt/update AUPs and other policies to limit access.

Per User and Duplicate Funding Restrictions

- E-Rate support **will not be provided** for more than one Wi-Fi hotspot provided for use by each student, school staff member, or library patron in the E-Rate program.
- E-Rate support **will not be provided** for duplicative funding or for the portion of eligible Wi-Fi hotspots and **services that have already been reimbursed** with E-Rate, Universal Service, or other federal, state, Tribal, or local funding, or other external sources of funding.
 - Certification will be required on the application for funding (FCC Form 471) and on the request for reimbursement forms (FCC Forms 472/474) that applicants and service providers are not seeking support for eligible Wi-Fi hotspot equipment and services that have been funded by other sources.



Recordkeeping

- Schools and libraries receiving support for off-premises Wi-Fi hotspots and services must maintain and retain asset and service inventories for at least 10 years and provide upon request.
- **For Schools**, the asset and service inventory must identify:
 1. the equipment make/model;
 2. the equipment serial number;
 3. the full name of the person to whom the equipment was provided;
 4. the dates the equipment was loaned out and returned, or the date the school was notified that the equipment was missing, lost, or damaged; and
 5. the service detail.
- **For Libraries**, the asset and service inventory must identify:
 1. the equipment make/model;
 2. the equipment serial number;
 3. the dates the equipment was loaned out and returned, or the date the library was notified that the equipment was missing, lost, or damaged; and
 4. the service detail.

Usage

Usage Requirements

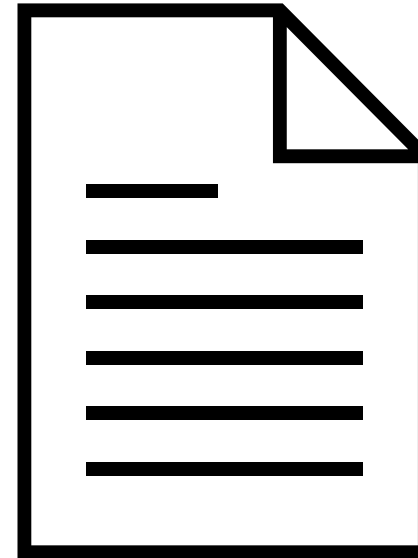
- Lines of service that have no data usage for **approximately three consecutive months** must be terminated by the service provider. Service providers are required to notify applicants of each line of hotspot service that goes unused for **at minimum 60 consecutive days** and to provide applicants 30 days for the hotspot to be used before terminating the line of service.
- **Service providers are required to provide schools and libraries with data usage reports at least once per billing period.** Schools and libraries should regularly review these reports to identify hotspots with periods of non-usage.
- Applicants may not request funding for Wi-Fi hotspots for future use or to be stored in case of an emergency and will be required to certify to this on the FCC Form 471.

Monitoring Usage Requirements: Applicant vs. Service Provider

Applicants	Service Providers
<p>Activate the Wi-Fi hotspot and service, make it available for loan, and publicize availability.</p> <p>Must certify having taken these steps on their FCC Forms 486.</p>	<p>Provide schools and libraries with data usage reports at least once per billing period.</p> <p>Reports should be in machine-readable digital format so the lines can be read and sorted, clearly identifying the lines that are not being used across billing periods or that will be or have been terminated due to non-usage.</p>
<p>When sent a non-usage notification by a service provider, determine whether the device and services are being used, should be redistributed, or should be discontinued.</p>	<p>At least once every 31 days, identify and notify applicants of each line of hotspot service that goes unused for at minimum 60 consecutive days.</p>
<p>30 days for the hotspot to be used before terminating the line of service.</p>	<p>When terminating a line of service, cannot bill the applicant for the balance that was not paid for by the E-Rate program.</p> <p>Must certify on FCC Form 473 (Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form) that they will comply with the requirements set out above.</p>

Usage Requirements in Practice

- Schools and libraries must make data usage reports available to the FCC and/or USAC upon request, including to support program integrity reviews.
- USAC will monitor school, library, and service provider compliance with these requirements including checking for warehousing and discontinued lines of services for non-usage.
- The Wireline Competition Bureau may resolve any procedural or administrative issues arising with adopted usage requirements.



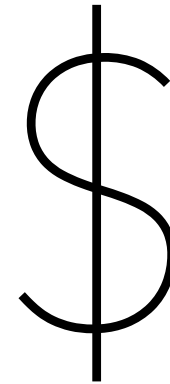
Additional Information

Reminder of E-Rate Rules

- Wi-Fi hotspots are subject to **all** existing E-Rate rules and requirements, such as:
 - Competitive bidding
 - Cost allocation
 - Discounting rules
 - Children's Internet Protection Act
 - Applicant payment of their non-discounted share
- Competitive Bidding:
 - All purchases must go through a fair and open competitive bidding process, with certain [exemptions](#).
 - Carefully consider all bids received and 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 weighted most heavily.
 - Must have a [legally binding agreement](#) in place before submitting the FCC Form 471.

Wi-Fi Hotspots: Competitive Bidding and ECF

- Services must be competitively bid prior to requesting funding.
 - Wi-Fi hotspots funded through the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) are **not grandfathered**.
 - If you received funding for Wi-Fi hotspots through ECF (or other non- E-Rate funding source), you can **competitively bid Internet access services** for that device through the E-Rate program.



FCC Form 470 Updates (Coming Soon)

- 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 hotspots, visit our [webpage](#).

What's Next

- Ensure your [entity](#) information is up to date in EPC.
- Confirm your Account Administrator and user permissions in EPC.
- 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 [FCC Form 470 Guiding Statements Table](#) to assist with determining the services needed and being requested.
- [File the FCC Form 470](#) when the FY 2025 version becomes available to initiate the competitive bidding process.
 - Watch the [FCC Form 470 and Competitive Bidding videos](#) and the [How to File an FCC Form 470 e-Learning Module](#) for guidance.

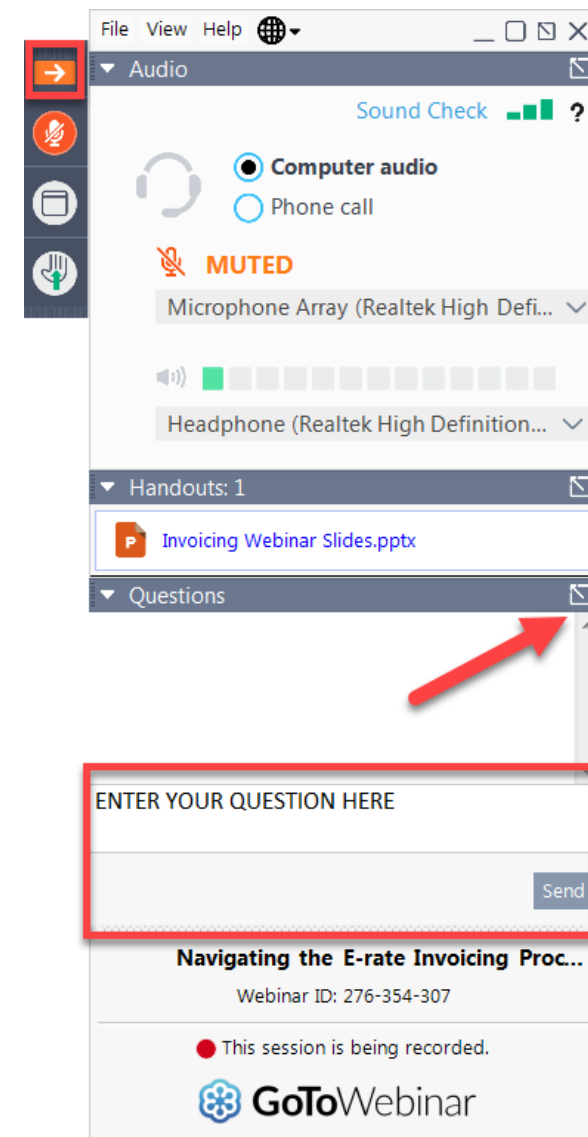
Resources

- [Eligible Services Overview](#)
- [Eligible Services FAQs](#)
- [FCC Form 470 Filing page](#)
- [FCC Form 470 and Competitive Bidding e-Learning Modules](#)
- [Calculating Discounts page](#)
- [Calculating Discounts FAQs](#)
- [Competitive Bidding page](#)
- [Competitive Bidding infographic](#)



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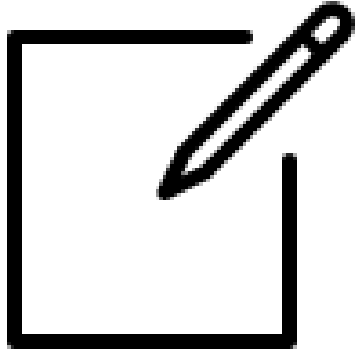
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