



Entering E-rate: Where to Begin

E-rate is a daunting process for beginners. There are three primary tasks that must be done to acclimate to E-rate: (1) learn the program rules; (2) determine the status of your organization's compliance with filing forms and completing other time-sensitive tasks; and (3) become established as a user in the online filing system called "EPC" (E-rate Productivity Center). The purpose of this Guide is to assist new E-rate contacts (beginners) with this process so they can be certain that no deadlines have been missed and all eligible funding has been collected.

The Guide contains five sections:

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Brief Program Overview

The Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program provides discount funding to all eligible K-12 schools (public, private and tribal) and public libraries to make affordable internet access and telecommunications services and equipment. E-rate funding is classified as: Data Transmission Services and/or Internet Access (called Category 1); and Internal Connections, Managed Internal Broadband Services, and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (called Category 2). Discounts range from 20-90 percent of the costs of eligible services and equipment, depending on the school and library poverty level and the urban/rural status. In order to receive E-rate funding, competitive bidding of the services and equipment is required by posting a form online at the E-rate administrator's web site (Schools and Libraries Division [SLD] of Universal Service Administrative Company[USAC]). Bids must be allowed for a minimum of 28 days after which the most cost effective proposal must be chosen. E-rate funding is then requested annually by applying to SLD. When funding is approved, it can be received one of two ways: either as a bill credit or by paying vendor bills in full and then seeking reimbursement of the E-rate portion, after the fact. The application process begins 6-12 months in advance of the funding year. Additional resources to learn the program basics:

- **E-rate Resource Manual:** posted online at the South Dakota Department of Education's web site, <https://doe.sd.gov/ofm/sderate.aspx>.
- **Recorded trainings for South Dakota applicants:** available at the same link above - <https://doe.sd.gov/ofm/sderate.aspx>.
- **USAC Program Description:** <https://www.usac.org/wp-content/uploads/e-rate/documents/Handouts/E-rate-Overview.pdf>
- **USAC Learning Library:** <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/learn/>

Initial Questions for New E-rate Contacts

When initially embarking on E-rate, E-rate contacts should first review these five questions and take the appropriate action where needed.

1) Are you a “User” in your school or library’s EPC account?

EPC (the E-rate Productivity Center) is SLD’s online portal where E-rate applications are filed, and processes/correspondence are completed with the exception of the reimbursement process. Each organization has an EPC Account, and each EPC Account has an Account Administrator (AA) and Users. Before any further action can be taken, a new E-rate contact must first determine if they are set up as a User for their school or library’s EPC Account.

- Go to <https://forms.universalservice.org/portal/login>, scroll to the bottom of the page and click ‘Continue’ then ‘Forgot Password’ (do not enter a username or password on this page). On the next page, enter your email address, all lowercase. If the system does not send a password reset prompt to your email address within 2 minutes, you likely are not yet an EPC User.
- To become an EPC User:
 - Your school or library’s EPC Account Administrator should log into EPC and click on “Manage Users” in the top right corner of their EPC Landing Page, then “Create New User,” and complete the required fields. The new User will then receive an email message from the EPC system with instructions to create their password, log into EPC, click on “Tasks” and accept the EPC Terms and Conditions.
 - If your school or library’s EPC Account Administrator is no longer with the organization, or if you’re unsure who your AA is, contact USAC at 888-203-8100 and they will assist you with becoming an EPC User and establishing a new Account Administrator for your organization.

2) Have you established your One Portal multi-factor authentication (MFA) validation choices?

One Portal is USAC’s umbrella sign-in system that requires all users to use multi-factor authentication (MFA) before they gain access to the online filing systems. The One-Portal/MFA set-up process requires several steps. See Section 6 of the E-rate Resource Manual for detailed assistance.

- Technical Hints: Before you begin:
 - ✓ Be sure to use a Chrome or Firefox browser
 - ✓ Disable all privacy features (such as EFF Privacy Badger)

If you are not currently an EPC or BEAR authorized user (meaning your email address is not in the USAC system), or if you experience problems setting up your One Portal account, call CSB at 888-203-8100.

3) Do you have BEAR Access?

Reimbursement System Access: Beginning on November 7, EPC account users that have permission to file BEAR forms will be able to do so. This is a new functionality that will be implemented then. As additional information about this new feature is made available this guide will be updated.

4) Are you subscribed to the South Dakota E-rate Listserv?

The South Dakota E-rate Coordinator maintains a one-way listserv that is used to disseminate regular updates about program changes, deadlines, funding commitments, training events, training guides and helpful reminders. If you are not currently receiving these regular E-rate updates from Debra Kriete, the South Dakota E-rate Coordinator, you can self-subscribe to the listserv here: https://www.k12.sd.us/maillinglist/SD_E-Rate.

5) Are you subscribed to the USAC Weekly News Brief?

USAC emails a weekly News Brief to applicants each Friday. If you are not currently receiving the USAC News Briefs, go to: <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/resources/news-brief/> to subscribe.

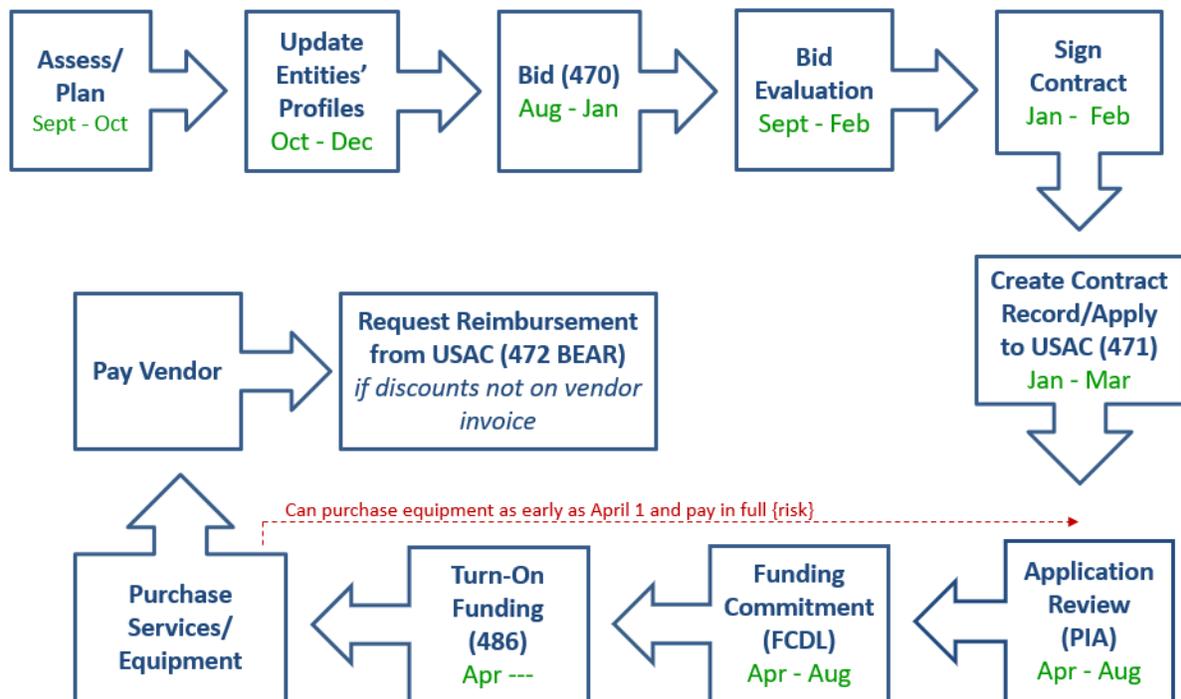
* * *

Upcoming Funding Year: FY 2024 (Services received July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)



The E-rate application process begins 6 - 12 months prior to the beginning of the next funding year. There are multiple deadlines that must be met during the application process. Funding Year 2024 begins July 1, 2024; therefore, the application process technically begins in July 2024, although most applicants begin their planning and forms filings in earnest in the fall of 2023.

The following are the key steps to the E-rate application process that align with this flowchart, organized by the month(s) during which that step of the process occurs. Based on when the new E-rate contact assumes their role, they should be able to understand what items are due when, and determine if that required step/form has been completed.



October 2023 – Early January 2024:

- During the annual “**Admin Window**,” schools enter enrollment and NSLP eligibility data in each school’s EPC profile and add or remove entities if needed. Libraries will update square footage data if there are changes. The data inputted into school profiles is what the EPC system uses to calculate school district, library and consortia discount rates. The Admin Window is typically open from about mid to late October and closes in mid-January just a few days before the Form 471 filing window opens. In FY 2023, for example, the last day of the Admin Window was January 16, 2023 right before midnight in the Eastern time zone and the Form 471 filing window opened on January 18, 2023.
 - If you have entered the E-rate cycle when the Admin Window is closed, but prior to the Form 471 filing deadline, you can submit the form 471 using the existing entity profile data, and then request the information be updated by submitting a correction (called a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter [RAL] Correction). The information will be updated as part of the pre-funding review of your form 471.
 - To update enrollment and NSLP data during the Admin Window:
 - > EPC Landing Page > District Name > Discount Rate > Show Entities > Right click on each school’s name and select “Open link in new tab” > Click Manage Organization on each tab > Enter enrollment/NSLP data > Submit > Repeat for each tab (school).
- Calculate your available **Category 2 budget** for the upcoming funding year. Note that all of the calculations that follow are prediscount amounts which means that it is the total amount of the purchases, and then your E-rate discount percentage is applied to compute the amount of E-rate funding that is available to your organization.

Depending on your entity type and size, there are different options to calculating your available Category 2 budget as follows:

Schools:

- School District with 11 or more schools: Greater of these two options: 1) district enrollment X \$167, OR 2) Number of schools X \$25,000.
- School Districts with 10 or fewer schools (USAC calls these ‘child entities’) have a third “hybrid” option. The hybrid method allows these smaller districts to calculate their C2 budgets on a per-school basis using the greater of either the \$25,000 funding floor or the budget multiplier, then adding up each school’s individual budgets to obtain the district-wide C2 budget. (Hint: a school with fewer than 150 students would want to use the \$25,000 funding floor for that school instead of the \$167/student.)
- Single School: School enrollment X \$167, OR \$25,000, whichever is greater.

Libraries:

- Library System with 11 or more libraries: Greater of these two options: 1) total square footage of the library branches in the library system X \$4.50, OR 2) # of library branches in the library system X \$25,000.
- Library Systems with 10 or fewer libraries (USAC calls these ‘child entities’) have a third “hybrid” option. The hybrid method allows these smaller entities to calculate their C2 budgets on a per library basis using the greater of either the \$25,000 funding floor or the budget multiplier, then adding up each library’s individual building budgets to obtain the system wide C2 budget. (Hint: a library branch with less than 5,556 square feet would want to use the \$25,000 funding floor instead of the \$4.50/sq ft.)
- Single Library: Square footage X \$4.50, OR \$25,000, whichever is greater.

The budget cycle is a five-year cycle that began in FY 2021 and will end with FY 2025. New E-rate contacts will need to determine whether any of the Category 2 budget funds were used in FY 2021 and/or FY 2022. USAC has a Category 2 budget tool that calculates the total amount of C2 funding currently available, using the most advantageous budget calculation option for each entity type. The tool will track each entity’s C2 budget, including amounts pending and committed, and remaining budgets. The tool is available in USAC’s Open Data platform:

<https://opendata.usac.org/E-rate/E-rate-C2-Budget-Tool-FY2021-/8z69-hkn7>.

To see specific data, use the simple Filters on the right toolbar (be sure to click “Apply” after selecting your filter). Then click ‘Export’ to download the results into Excel.

July 2023 (Typically Fall) – January 2024:

- File **Form 470** to competitively bid equipment and services for which a new contract is required. To determine if a new contract is required, review the existing contract (if there is one) to determine if the contract is expiring and/or if any contract extensions are included. If the contract is expiring, a new Form 470 is required. A Form 470 also is required to be filed annually for services provided on a

month-to-month (MTM) basis. A Form 470 is not required in the *remaining* years of a multi-year contract, or when an applicant is purchasing the Commercially-Available Business Class Internet Option (CABIO) that costs no more than \$300/month and is for a downstream speed of at least 100 Mbps per building and 10 Mbps upstream (such as a DSL or Cable Internet service).

- To submit a new Form 470, select “FCC Form 470” at the top right corner of your EPC Landing Page.



- If you’re unsure whether a Form 470 has been submitted yet, scroll to the bottom of your EPC Landing Page under “FCC Forms and Post-Commitment Requests” and select the Form Type and Funding Year. There you will see whether any Form 470s have been filed for your organization. If no results are returned, this means there have been no Form 470s filed for that year.

January 2024 – February 2024

- During the bidding period, vendors review Form 470 postings and submit proposals directly to applicants as prescribed in the Form 470 or RFP.
- After a minimum 28-day bidding period, applicants then conduct a **bid evaluation** using price of eligible equipment/services as the most heavily weighted factor to select the most cost-effective proposal.
- Applicants then negotiate and sign contracts with awarded vendors. If local policies require, applicants must obtain board approval prior to signing the contract.
 - Unless using a non-contract, MTM Category 1 service, contracts must be signed prior to filing the Form 471. All Category 2 service/equipment procurements must have a contract.
 - Only the applicant must sign/date the contract **prior to** filing Form 471.

January 2024 – March 2024:

- Create **Contract Record(s)** in EPC for each newly signed contract. The CR is where you will upload a newly signed contract, identify associated Form 470 number, winning vendor, # of bids received, contract signing date, and contract extensions, if any.
 - To create new Contract Records or view CRs that have been previously created, click on the name of your school/library on the EPC Landing Page (just below the USAC logo in the top left corner of the page), select “Contracts” from the top toolbar, and then “Manage Contracts.”



- File **Form 471** by **the deadline which has not yet been announced, but is estimated to be around March 27, 2024**, to formally request E-rate funding from USAC. Category 1 and Category 2 requests must be filed on separate applications, but multiple Funding Requests (FRNs) can be submitted on each application, as needed. The Form 471 imports discount calculation data from the entity’s EPC profiles, and each FRN will be linked to a Contract Record unless the service is being provided on a month-to-month (MTM) basis. The form also requires applicants to identify the specific services or equipment being requested, costs per circuit or per unit, quantity, and recipients of service.
 - To submit a new Form 471, select “FCC Form 471” at the top right corner of your EPC Landing Page.



April 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025:

- Applicants may **purchase/install** Category 2 equipment as early as April 1 prior to the funding year if they choose to pay for the equipment in-full, and with the risk of not receiving E-rate funding approval. However, E-rate funding cannot be reimbursed from USAC until at least July 1, or Form 486 certification date, whichever is later. The deadline to purchase/install Category 2 equipment is September 30, three months after the close of the funding year. This provides applicants with a full 18 months to purchase/install equipment instead of the 12-month funding year for recurring services. All

equipment must be installed by September 30, even if installation is not being paid with E-rate funding.

- Applicants must label all E-rate funded equipment and maintain a Fixed Asset Register (FAR), (also known as an Asset Inventory) that provides details of all equipment including make & model, serial number (if available), physical location of equipment (building/room number), date installed, funding year, FRN number, PO number, and related payment information. See Section 15 of the E-rate Resource Manual for more information and a sample asset inventory.

February 2024 – FCDL Date:

- After the Form 471 is submitted, it will undergo **Program Integrity Assurance (PIA)** review where the PIA team will review the application to check for accurate discounts, eligible services, compliant bidding, and cost effectiveness. If PIA reviewers have questions, they will post the questions in EPC, and email the Form 471 contact, providing a link to their questions. Applicants have 15 days to respond. Failure to respond may result in denial of funding.
 - If you're unsure whether any PIA inquiries are pending for your applications, click on "Pending Inquiries" at the top of your EPC Landing Page, or call USAC at 888-203-8100.

Pending Inquiries

Type

Application/Request

Funding Year

Late April 2024 – September 2024:

- USAC issues weekly funding "waves" containing **Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs)** that explains whether the FRN(s) was approved, reduced, denied or cancelled. The FCDL is posted in the organization's EPC portal, and the Form 471 contact and Account Administrator receive an email with two attached files: a PDF file of the FCDL and a summary of the approved funding in an Excel file. The files can also be accessed in EPC under the Notifications section on your Landing Page. USAC's goal is to have all FCDLs issued by September 1.

Notifications

Notification Type

Funding Year

- Applicants have 60 days from the FCDL date to **appeal** to USAC if they disagree with a funding decision. If USAC denies the appeal, applicants have 60 days from the appeal decision letter to appeal to the FCC.
 - Appeals to USAC are submitted by selecting “Appeal” at the top right corner of your EPC Landing Page.



- Appeals to the FCC are submitted in the ECFS Filing System <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/>, listing Proceeding **02-6**.

FCDL Date – October 28, 2024:

- Within 120 days of the FCDL date, or service start date (whichever is later), applicant must file **Form 486** in EPC. The Form 486 certifies their organization’s compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and authorizes USAC to pay invoices that are submitted because services have begun or will begin.
 - To submit a new Form 471, select “FCC Form 486” at the top right corner of your EPC Landing Page.



- If you are unsure whether a Form 486 has been submitted, scroll to the bottom of your EPC Landing Page under “FCC Forms and Post-commitment Requests” and select the Form Type and Funding Year.

▼ **FCC Forms and Post-Commitment Requests**

FCC Forms
 Post-Commitment Requests

Form Type FCC Form 486 ▼

Funding Year 2024 ▼

July 1, 2024 – October 28, 2025:

- Applicants that have paid the full cost of the vendor invoice may seek **reimbursement** from USAC using the Form **472 BEAR**. Likewise, vendors that have provided the applicant with discounted bills may seek reimbursement from USAC using the Form 474 SPI.
- The Deadline to submit reimbursement forms for recurring services (generally Category 1 services and Category 2 basic maintenance) is October 28, 2025 for FY 2024 (4 months after the funding year has ended which is June 30, 2024). The Deadline to submit reimbursement forms for non-recurring items (generally Category 2 equipment/licenses) is January 28, 2026 for FY 2024 (4 months after the last date to purchase/install equipment which is September 30, 2025). Applicants may request a single, 4-month reimbursement extension, but the extension request must be submitted by the original reimbursement deadline.
 - If you are unsure whether a BEAR or SPI has been paid, refer to Step 6 below.
 - Submit new BEARs in EPC using the new BEAR functionality. More information will be published when available.

* * *



Current Funding Year: FY 2023

The “current” funding year would be considered the funding year for which you are currently receiving services, as opposed to the upcoming funding year for which you are applying. Funding Year 2023 is from July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 (September 30 for non-recurring purchases such as equipment). The steps below will help a new E-rate contact determine what has previously been submitted by their school or library and what steps remain to be completed in order to successfully obtain E-rate funding.

1) Determine if your school/library submitted any applications for FY 2023.

First, download a spreadsheet showing your organization’s FY 2023 funding requests using the “FRN Status Tool” at <https://data.usac.org/publicreports/FRN/Status/FundYear>.

- Change Funding Year to FY 2023.
- Enter your school/library’s BEN (Billed Entity Number). If you don’t know your BEN, you can search for it at: https://sl.universalservice.org/Utilities/BilledEntitySearch_Public.asp.

I. Required Criteria

Funding Year

Please enter one or more of the following:

State

BEN

CRN

SPIN (Go to SPIN Search):

Enter your own Billed Entity # (BEN)

- Then scroll down and click “Select Data Points” and then “Select All Data Points.”

Select Data Points

Step 2. Please select the datapoints you would like to include in your datafile:

Select All Data Points

- Then scroll to the bottom of the page and click “Build Data File.”

A spreadsheet will open showing all Funding Requests submitted by your school/library for that funding year. If the spreadsheet is empty, it means no applications were submitted in that funding year and you can ignore the remaining steps.

To see a synopsis of all funding requested/disbursed since 1998, go to: <https://tools.e-ratecentral.com/us/stateInformation.asp?state=SD> and enter your school or library’s Billed Entity Number (BEN) under ‘Funding Quick Search’ on the left side of the page. On the results page, click on each funding year to drill down into the FRNs.

To see copies of the actual forms, appeals and other post-commitment requests that were submitted since FY 2016, scroll to the bottom of your EPC Landing Page, and select the relevant form and funding year.

2) If applications were submitted, determine how many Funding Requests were submitted and the PIA Review Status of each Funding Request.

Each row represents a separate Funding Request, called an FRN, that was submitted for that funding year. Each FRN has a unique number that begins with the funding year (FY 2021 have FRNs that begin 21xxx).

- Review Column C to see if the FRN(s) were Funded, Denied, Cancelled, or Pending.
 - If an FRN’s status is ‘Pending,’ contact USAC at 888-203-8100 and explain that you are new to your organization and ask if there are any open PIA inquiries for the Pending FRN (the FRN number is listed in Column A).

A	B	C	D
FRN	FRN Nickname	FRN Status	471 Application Number
2199035437	SDN Circuits STATE	Funded	211024820
2199035472	SDN Circuits Brookings	Funded	211024820
2199035477	SDN Sioux Falls Circuits	Funded	211024820
2199035511	Midco Internet	Funded	211024820
2199035512	Midco Circuits	Funded	211024820

- For Funded FRNs, continue with the next steps.

3) Review the following columns to understand the key information of each funding request:

- Column AF will show the vendor’s name. Column AG will show the vendor’s SPIN number.
- Column AK will show the date the school/library signed the contract with the vendor. If blank, it means the applicant indicated it was a month-to-month service for which no contract was signed.
- Column AJ will show whether a Form 486 has been submitted.
- Column AL will show the date that the school/library reported that the contract will expire, and Column AM will show whether the school/library reported whether any extensions were included on the contract. (Note: the system does not adjust downward the extension numbers from year to year when an extension is used.)
- Column AN will show the deadline to submit a reimbursement form to USAC.

AF	AG	AH	AI	AJ	AK	AL	AM	AN
Service Provider Name	SPIN	SPAC Filed?	Fund Year	486 Service Start Date	Contract Award Date	Contract Exp or Svc End Date	Remaining Contract Extensions	Last Date to Invoice
South Dakota Network, LLC	143002997	Yes	2021	7/1/2021	2/1/2019	6/30/2024	3	10/28/2022
South Dakota Network, LLC	143002997	Yes	2021	7/1/2021	2/1/2019	6/30/2024	3	10/28/2022
South Dakota Network, LLC	143002997	Yes	2021	7/1/2021	2/1/2019	6/30/2024	3	10/28/2022
Midcontinent Communications	143001179	Yes	2021	7/1/2021	1/29/2021	6/30/2023	3	10/28/2022
Midcontinent Communications	143001179	Yes	2021	7/1/2021	1/30/2019	6/30/2022	3	10/28/2022

- Column BH will show the approved discount rate.
- Column BF will show the approved pre-discount amount, and Column BJ will show the approved discounted (committed) amount.
- Column BL will show the Service Category (Data Transmission/Internet, Internal Connections, Basic Maintenance of MIBS)

BE	BF	BG	BH	BI	BJ	BK	BL
Orig Total Cost	Cmtd Total Cost	Orig Discount	Cmtd Discount	Orig Funding Request	Cmtd Funding Request	Orig FRN Service Type	Cmtd FRN Service Type
\$2,501,181.00	\$2,501,181.00	66%	66%	\$1,650,779.46	\$1,650,779.46	Data Transmission and/or Internet Access	Data Transmission and/or Internet Access
\$70,278.36	\$70,278.36	66%	66%	\$46,383.72	\$46,383.72	Data Transmission and/or Internet Access	Data Transmission and/or Internet Access
\$227,715.60	\$227,715.60	66%	66%	\$150,292.30	\$150,292.30	Data Transmission and/or Internet Access	Data Transmission and/or Internet Access
\$164,160.00	\$164,160.00	66%	66%	\$108,345.60	\$108,345.60	Data Transmission and/or Internet Access	Data Transmission and/or Internet Access
\$323,852.40	\$323,852.40	66%	66%	\$213,742.58	\$213,742.58	Data Transmission and/or Internet Access	Data Transmission and/or Internet Access

4) Determine if a Form 486 was filed for each FRN.

- Assuming the FRN(s) was Funded, review Column AJ to determine if a Form 486 was submitted. If the cell is blank, file the Form 486 in EPC as soon as possible. If the Form 486 is being submitted after October 28, 2023 (or more than 120 days after the FCDL date showing in Column BP), file the Form 486, then contact Debra Kriete, the South Dakota E-rate Coordinator, at dmkierte@comcast.net for instructions on submitting an appeal to USAC to request that funding be restored.

AJ
486 Service Start Date
7/1/2023
7/1/2023
7/1/2023
7/1/2023
7/1/2023
7/1/2023

5) Determine if the vendor filed their Form 473 Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) for the current Funding Year.

- Review Column AH “SPAC Filed?” If the cell is marked Yes, do nothing. If the cell is marked No, contact that vendor ASAP and tell them they must file their Vendor Form 473 Service Provider Annual Certification Form immediately for this funding year. Without this column showing Yes, USAC will not approve your reimbursement request.

AH
SPAC Filed?
Yes

6) Determine if any funding remains to be reimbursed.

- Review Columns BX, BY and BZ. Column BX shows the total E-rate funding committed for the funding request. Column BZ will show the total amount of reimbursement that has been disbursed by USAC to date and Column BY will show if the reimbursement form was submitted by the vendor (SPI) or the applicant (BEAR).

BX	BY	BZ
FRN Committed Amount	Invoicing Mode	Total Authorized Disbursement
\$1,650,779.46	NOT SET	
\$46,383.72	NOT SET	
\$150,292.30	NOT SET	
\$108,345.60	NOT SET	
\$213,742.58	NOT SET	

- If Column BY shows “Not Set” it means that neither an applicant Form 472 BEAR or vendor Form 474 SPI has been submitted to USAC seeking reimbursement. If the status is Not Set, the applicant should review their vendor service/equipment invoices to determine if the vendor provided discounted bills or whether the applicant paid the in full.
- If Column BZ shows \$0.00, it means that a BEAR or SPI was submitted to USAC and likely has been \$0-funded (denied). If Column BY indicates a BEAR was submitted and has been \$0-funded, the applicant should contact USAC at 888-203-8100 to request details pertaining to the BEAR and exactly why it was denied. As long as the reimbursement deadline has not passed, the applicant should submit a new, corrected BEAR (there is no way to amend an existing BEAR).
- Applicants that have paid the full cost of the vendor invoice may seek **reimbursement** from USAC using the Form **472 BEAR** (in the legacy system, not in EPC). Likewise, vendors that have provided the applicant with discounted bills may seek reimbursement from USAC using the Form 474 SPI.
 - The deadline to submit reimbursement forms for recurring services (generally Category 1 services and Category 2 basic maintenance) for FY 2023 is October 28, 2024 (4 months after the funding year has ended which is June 30, 2024).
 - The deadline to submit reimbursement forms for non-recurring items (generally Category 2 equipment/licenses) is January 28, 2025 (4 months after the last date to purchase/install equipment which is September 30, 2024).

- Applicants and/or vendors may request 1, 4-month reimbursement extension, but the extension request must be submitted by the original reimbursement deadline.
- The exact invoicing deadline for each FRN can be found in Column AN.
- Submit new BEARs in EPC using the new BEAR functionality. More information will be published when available.

After all of these steps have been completed, and related documents have been archived at the school/library where they must be retained for a period of 10 years following the last date to receive service in a funding year, FY 2023 can be considered “complete.”

* * *



Previous Funding Year: FY 2022

The “previous” funding year would be considered the funding year which ended June 30, 2023 (September 30, 2023 for non-recurring purchases such as equipment). Typically, after a funding year has ended, the only steps remaining are to:

1. Determine if vendor invoices were discounted, and if not, be certain that the Form 472 BEAR reimbursement forms have been submitted to USAC by the required deadlines: and
2. Archive all relevant documents related to the procurements, discounts, services and equipment received, asset registers, CIPA, and vendor invoicing for the funding year.

The steps required for determining whether funds have been committed and disbursed for the prior funding year are the same steps outlined above for the ‘Current’ Funding Year, except that applicants would download a spreadsheet showing your organization’s **FY 2022** funding requests instead of FY 2023. The spreadsheet can be downloaded using the “FRN Status Tool” at <https://data.usac.org/publicreports/FRN/Status/FundYear>.

- Change Funding Year to FY 2022.
- Enter your school/library’s BEN (Billed Entity Number). If you don’t know your BEN, you can search for it at: https://sl.universalservice.org/Utilities/BilledEntitySearch_Public.asp.

Step 1 : Please enter the search criteria

I. Required Criteria

Funding Year	<input type="text" value="2022"/>
Please enter one or more of the following:	
State	<input type="text" value="SD"/>
BEN	<input type="text" value="134238"/>
CRN	<input type="text"/>
SPIN (Go to SPIN Search):	<input type="text"/>

Enter your Billed Entity # (BEN)

- Follow the remaining steps, beginning on Page 11 of this Guide.

FY 2022 Reimbursement Deadlines

- The deadline to submit reimbursement forms for recurring services (generally Category 1 services and Category 2 basic maintenance) for FY 2022 was October 28, 2023.
- The deadline to submit reimbursement forms for non-recurring items (generally Category 2 equipment/licenses) for FY 2022 is January 28, 2024 (4 months after the last date to purchase/install equipment which is normally September 30, 2023).

- Applicants are permitted to request 1, 4-month reimbursement extension, and the extension request is required to be submitted by the **original reimbursement deadline**. To determine the exact deadline for each FRN, refer to Column AN.
- Submit new BEARs in EPC using the new BEAR functionality. More information will be published when available.

After all discounts/reimbursements have been received, and all related documents have been archived at the school/library where they must be retained for a period of 10 years following the last date to receive service in a funding year, FY 2022 can be considered “complete.”



E-rate Funding Year 2024

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

South Dakota Applicants

Debra Kriete, Esq.
South Dakota State E-rate Coordinator
For the South Dakota Department of Education
October 2023



Agenda

- E-rate Overview
- Application Cycle
 - Pre-Funding Commitment
 - Funding Commitment
 - Post-Funding Commitment
- Forms/Online Filing
- Current Action Items
- Questions



Overview

3

E-rate is...

- A technology program for affordable broadband access
- Open to all K-12 schools and public and tribal libraries
- Funded at \$4.768 billion per year, plus annual inflation adjustment
- Based on a competitive bid model to set prices for services and equipment
- Funding quantified as a discount percentage from the cost of qualified services and equipment

4

E-rate is managed by...

Federal Communications Commission

- Administrative agency in charge of regulations, enforcement, policies

Universal Service Administrative Co. (USAC)

- Administrator of all universal service programs including E-rate

Schools and Libraries Division of USAC (SLD)

- Division inside USAC responsible for E-rate

5

Who Does What?

FCC

Issues rules
Issue legal decisions
Interprets rules
Sets all policies
Supervises SLD
Decides appeals & waivers

USAC/SLD

Program administrator
Reviews & processes form
Must obtain policy direction from FCC
Follows FCC polices

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The State E-rate Coordinator

- Offers E-rate training and assistance to applicants & serves as liaison with SLD
- Maintains State E-rate Listserv
- Self-subscribe at this link:
https://www.k12.sd.us/MailingList/SD_E-Rate
- Prepares & submits DDN State Network E-rate Application

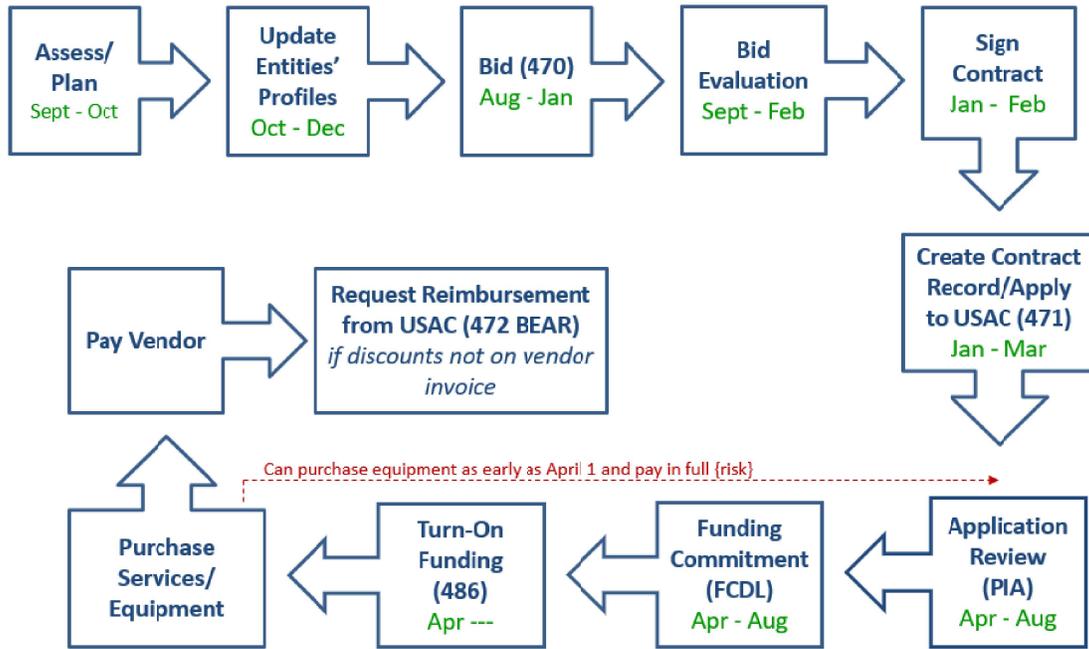
7

Resources

- Subscribe to state E-rate listserv to receive updates and reminders about E-rate
 - https://www.k12.sd.us/MailingList/SD_E-Rate
- E-rate page on South Dakota Department of Education's web site
 - <https://doe.sd.gov/ofm/sderate.aspx>
 - Training guides and presentations are available there
- State E-rate Coordinator – Debra Kriete
 - dmkriete@comcast.net
 - 888 232 0241
 - Answers questions and operates helpdesk
- Schools and Libraries Division News Brief subscription
 - News briefs are emailed to applicants
 - Sign up at <https://fe391570756406797d1477.pub.s10.sfm-content.com/3n2usens2cz>
 - Review past issues here <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/resources/news-brief/>

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Big Picture



9

Available for Public Use

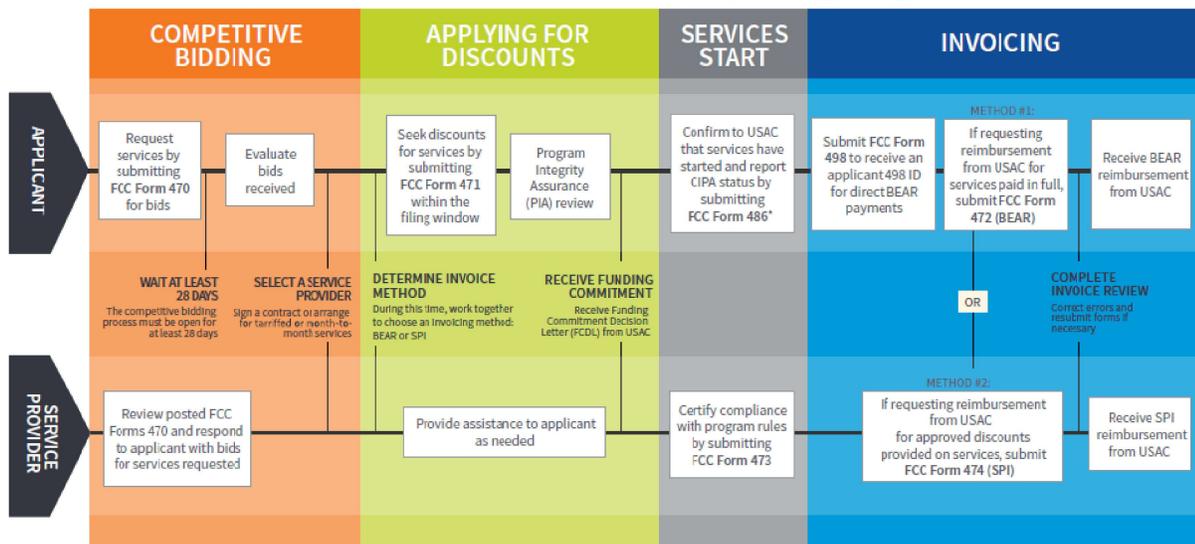


Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program APPLICATION PROCESS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

APPLICANTS: Applicants must first have an entity number and an E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) account.

SERVICE PROVIDERS: Service providers must first obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN /service provider 498 ID) by submitting FCC Form 498.



FORMORE INFORMATION:

- Website: The application process is broken down in detail for both **applicants** and **service providers** on the E-rate Program website (www.usac.org/e-rate).
- **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.

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When is the Funding Period?

- Funding/service period begins July 1, 2024, for internet, data transmission service, basic maintenance and managed internal broadband services
- Service period for Category 2 equipment is April 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025
- Applicants must determine service & equipment needs 6 – 12 months ahead of funding year to conduct bidding and apply for funding per E-rate cycle and deadlines

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3 E-rate Pillars

Eligible Entity

- K-12 School per State law
- Library eligible for LSTA funding
- Tribal libraries

Eligible Service

- Listed on Eligible Services List
- Delivered to eligible entity

E-rate Discount

- Based on % of Free/Reduced Students & rural/urban location
- Correlate to E-rate Discount Matrix

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Eligible Entities

Public, private, tribal schools

- Not for profit
- Must be recognized as school by State

Libraries eligible for funding under LSTA

- Must have separate independent budget
- Must pay for E-rate eligible services
 - Dual use libraries – Public library must have a separate budget and pay for technology in order to be able to apply for E-rate

Other Eligible Buildings

Schools with Pre-k students are eligible if the Pre-k program is part of public school district

- This includes Head Start
- Day care centers not recognized by State as school do not qualify
- Independent Head Start programs not eligible
- Pre-k students must be ages 3 +

Living areas of certain residential schools

- Tribal students, children with disabilities, juvenile justice students and schools with 35% or more NSLP percentage

Home Based Locations

Not eligible for E-rate

- Does not matter if this is the primary location of where student receives education.

The only exception is for residential areas of certain schools such as tribal, juvenile justice, children with disabilities and boarding schools with 35% or more of students qualify for National School Lunch Program

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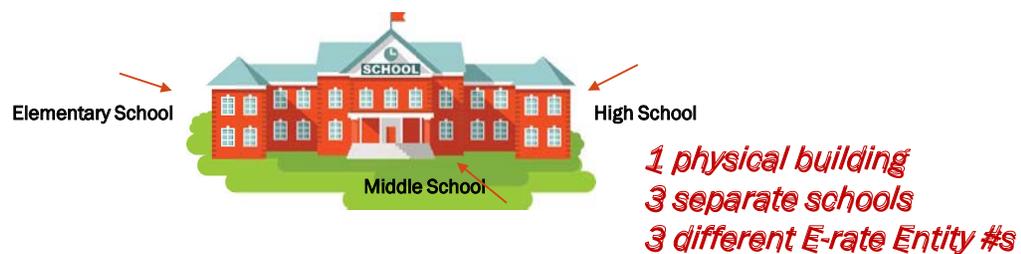
Administrative Buildings - NIFs

- A building that is part of the district or library but is primarily administrative
 - If the building is not designated as a school by State, then it's an administrative building
 - Even if there is some classroom instruction in the building
- E-rate name is "Non-Instructional Facility ("NIF")
- Building must be listed on the funding application and must have its own Entity Number
- Qualify for C1 funding **but not for C2 funding**
- Central network equipment supporting S/L buildings may be in a NIF

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E-rate Entity Numbers

- Each school, library or NIF must be listed on E-rate funding application as a recipient of service.
- Must have an E-rate assigned number called “Entity Number.”
- Definition of school based on state law
- Multiple schools in one building – each school should have its own entity number.



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Other Kinds of Buildings

•Annex

- An **annex to a school** is considered part of that school (not a separate school) but separated from that school by a public right-of-way
- An **annex to a library** is considered part of that library (not a separate library) but separated from that library by a public right-of-way
 - Annexes do not require their own entity numbers

Swing space temporarily houses students from a school which is considered the "main entity" or original location of the student population. The students may need to be temporarily relocated due to closure, construction, or a revamping of their technological infrastructure at the school

- Obtain an entity number for a swing space

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What Services & Equipment Qualify?

Category 1: Broadband & Internet Services **TO** buildings

- Internet access service
- Data transmission service
- Category 1 funding is not capped

Category 2: Network services/equipment **INSIDE** buildings

- Internal Connections equipment/service
- Managed Internal Broadband Services
- Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections
- Category 2 funding is capped

FCC publishes annual Eligible Services List

<https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/before-you-begin/eligible-services-list/>

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C1 Data Transmission Lines

- High speed connections *to and between school and library buildings* leased from a service provider
- Public school districts with all buildings connected to the DDN will likely not have data transmission lines that they pay for
- Generally, if a building is not connected to DDN, then a data line or Internet line is needed for that school or library to obtain Internet access
- Data lines are most frequently used for a Wide Area Network service
 - Circuits that interconnect schools or libraries to one another
 - Also called “building to building” service

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C1 Internet Access

Eligible Internet Access Service is provided by different kinds of service providers such as –

- Cable companies
- Phone companies
- Internet service companies
- Satellite companies
- Wireless companies

Each company may include add-on features as part of the base service price such as -

- Basic firewall protection
- Domain name service
- Dynamic host configuration
- Filtering
- When these features are part of the basic Internet service and there's no additional charge, these features also qualify for E-rate funding.
- If there are separate add-on charges, these charges don't qualify for E-rate and must be deducted from funding requests

Examples of ineligible components of Internet access (with or without separate fees)

- Any kind of end user device
- Web hosting

C1 Other Eligibility

These charges qualify for E-rate

- Installation costs (include request on bidding Form 470)
- State, federal and local taxes
- Universal service fund charge

These charges don't qualify for E-rate and need to be deducted from funding requests

- Late payment charges
- Finance charges
- Paper statement fees
- Administrative charges not related to Internet or data transmission
- Administrative cost of collecting USF surcharge
- Property tax surcharge
- Ineligible internet features

C1 Leased Dark Fiber & Purchased Fiber

- If you have a building that needs broadband service, you may also consider leasing dark fiber and then adding electronics to light the fiber
- If there are no economic options to lease service from a vendor, you may also consider requesting a vendor to build facilities that you would own
- For dark fiber or purchased fiber to qualify for E-rate funding, there are many intricate requirements that must be met

Mentioning these options in case someone may need more information

- Contact me for a separate phone call or Zoom session to discuss the detailed requirements

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C2 Equipment/Service

Data network equipment and service *inside buildings* needed for broadband & Internet connectivity

3 Subcategories

- Internal Connections
- Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections
- Managed Internal Broadband Services

Funding is capped based on 5-year budget formula

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C2 Internal Connections

Component	Component
Access Points	Uninterruptible power supply/battery backup for eligible equipment
Antennas	Wireless controller
Connectors	Software/operating systems of eligible equipment
Cabling	Licenses (right to use) for eligible equipment
Caching	Virtualized (cloud based) functionalities
Basic firewall functionality	Bundled warranty included in price (not separate fee)
Switches	Installation, configuration of eligible equipment
Routers	Basic training on use of equipment
Racks	Licenses

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C2 Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC)

- Equipment being maintained must be eligible
 - Cost must be based on estimated time and materials
 - Insurance type contracts are not eligible
 - *Reimbursements limited to actual time and expense incurred on maintenance*
 - Extended warranties are not eligible
 - Software updates and basic technical support are eligible without having to document use of the service
- If prepaid for multiple years, you can only claim the annual cost of the maintenance and must annually for yearly cost



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C2 Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS)

- Services provided by third party for operation, management, and monitoring of eligible internal connections
- Services may include:
 - Management and operation of the LAN/WLAN
 - Installation, activation and initial configuration of eligible components
 - On-site training on use of equipment
- Equipment ownership options
 - 3rd party manager may own equipment that is leased to the school or library.
 - School or library may own the equipment and contract for management services.
- MIBS includes network monitoring by personnel, but Basic Maintenance does not include monitoring

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Calculation of C2 Budgets

- 5-year cycle for C2 budgets, and new cycle began FY 2021 – FY 2025
- All budgets will re-set for FY 2026 – no carry forward of funds
- Budgets are pre-discount amount
- E-rate discount is applied to quantify the amount of E-rate funding
- See Excel spreadsheet for each school, district, library Category 2 **pre-discount** budget

Single School Budget:

\$167 x total enrollment OR **\$25,000**, whichever total budget is greater

School Districts:

\$167 x total district enrollment, OR

\$25,000 x total # of schools in the district, whichever total budget is greater

Independent Libraries:

\$4.50 x total square footage OR **\$25,000**, whichever total budget is greater

Library Systems:

\$4.50 x total square feet of all library branches OR **\$25,000** * # branches, whichever total budget is greater

Hybrid budget option for districts/library systems with less than 10 schools or library branches

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E-rate C2 Budget Example

5 Yr. Budget Cap *	E-rate Discount %	E-rate will pay	Applicant's Share %	District must pay
\$747,108.00	60%	\$448,264.80	40%	\$298,843.20

- The C2 budget cap is the **pre-discount price**. The E-rate discount percentage then is applied to the budget cap to quantify the amount of available E-rate funding. In this example the Applicant's share is 40% that they would owe

E-rate Discount Matrix

INCOME Measured by % of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	CATEGORY ONE (C1)		CATEGORY TWO (C2)	
	URBAN Discount	RURAL Discount	URBAN Discount	RURAL Discount
Less than 1%	20%	25%	20%	25%
1% to 19%	40%	50%	40%	50%
20% to 34%	50%	60%	50%	60%
35% to 49%	60%	70%	60%	70%
50% to 74%	80%	80%	80%	80%
75% to 100%	90%	90%	85%	85%

Alternative Measures to NSLP

2 Options

- **Report '0'** as number of free/reduced lunch qualifying students
- Conduct **income survey** of students' families
 - NSLP form may be used in place of survey instrument
 - NSLP form or Survey must be sent to each student
 - Ask whether family is enrolled in –
 - Medicaid
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly Food stamps
 - Supplementary Security Income (SSI)
 - Federal public housing assistance or Section 8
 - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
 - All these programs have same IEGs as NSLP

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E-rate Productivity Center (EPC)

ONLINE FILING PORTAL FOR
MOST E-RATE FORMS

EPC Overview

- E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) is the online filing system for most E-rate forms
- EPC log-in requires Multi-Factor Authentication
- Each person needs to be set up as a user
- To determine whether you are set up in EPC as a user, go to <https://forms.universalservice.org/portal/login>
 - Select **Continue**
 - Select **Forgot password?** link
 - Enter your email address in all lower-case letters and then select **Reset via Email**
 - If you do not receive a system-generated email from EPC to re-set your password within about 2 minutes, then you can assume you're not set up in EPC as a user

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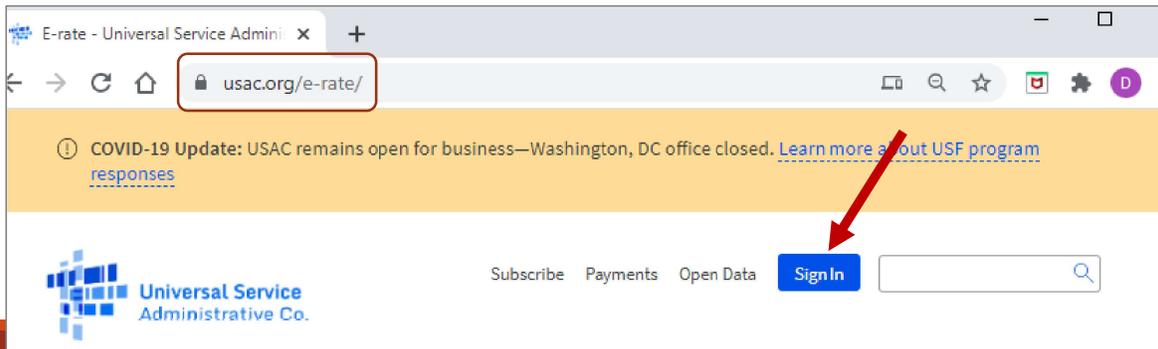
To Become an EPC User

- Two options available
- Easiest Process
 - Ask your school or library "Account Administrator" of EPC to create your account
 - From the Landing Page, choose "Manage Users" and then "Create a New User"
 - Once the AA completes the required fields, a system-generated email will be sent to the new user with instructions to create a password, log into EPC, click on "Tasks" and accept the EPC Terms and Conditions
- 2nd Option if the AA is no longer with the school or library or you're not sure who the AA is –
 - Call the E-rate Client Service Bureau at 888 203 8100 and ask them to set up a new user. They will help you and provide specific instructions to follow

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Multi-Factor Authentication

- EPC now “sits” behind the **One Portal** interface that requires 2 forms of ID to authenticate each user
- Initial set up of MFA requires several steps
 - Initially, use either Chrome or Firefox browser & disable all privacy features
 - Must be set up as an EPC user or this will be configured when first time users log into EPC
- Log into the system using the “Sign In” button on E-rate home page



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Initial MFA Set Up – Intro Screen

- This screen appears each time you log into One Portal
- Select **Continue** button

EPC users and BEAR Form filers: If this is your first time logging in to One Portal, please read this information carefully.

USAC has added multifactor authentication (MFA) to increase the security of our Universal Service Fund (USF) IT applications. The first time you sign into an application, the system will prompt you to set up MFA for your account. To do this:

1. Click the blue **Continue** button below.
2. Click the **Forgot Password** link.
3. Enter your Username (your email address) and click **Reset via Email**.
4. When you receive the email, click the link to create a password. Your password must be at least eight characters long and include one lowercase letter, one uppercase letter, one number, and one special character.
5. Accept the system's terms of use and click **Sign In**.
6. On the next page, confirm the email associated with your account and click **Send Email**.
7. Check your email for a verification code.
8. Enter the code and click **Verify**.

After logging in, you will see USAC's new single portal application dashboard if you have access to more than one application. On this page you can access all of the USF applications associated with your log in. This means users no longer have to sign into multiple applications to interact with different USF programs.

From the dashboard, you can visit the "Settings" page to add a cell phone number to your account. This will allow you to receive verification codes via either email or text message when you log in in the future.

To learn more about USAC's MFA and to find a list of all USF IT applications included in the single portal, visit USAC's website. If you cannot access the email associated with your account and need to set up a new log in, please contact your organization's USF administrator. If you need to reset your password, click the "forgot password" link. More detailed instructions are available in [this video](#).

Continue

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Initial MFA Set Up

Select **Forgot Password** –

Do **not** enter

Username/Password

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Username

Password

Forgot password?

You are accessing a portal to Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) systems used to administer participation in the federal Universal Service programs in compliance with 47 C.F.R. Part 54. Access to the systems is provided solely to USAC-authorized users for USAC-authorized business purposes. By logging in, you represent that you are an authorized user. Use of this system indicates acceptance of the terms and conditions governing the USAC systems. USAC monitors user access and content for compliance with applicable laws and policies. Use of the system may be recorded, read, searched, copied and/or captured and is also subject to audit. Unauthorized use or misuse of this system is strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary and/or legal action.

Click the box to accept

By signing in, I accept the terms and conditions of the USAC system.

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Initial MFA Set Up

Enter EPC Username which is the email address you normally use to log into EPC (and the BEAR system).

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Email sent!

✓ Email has been sent with instructions to jtschell@comcast.net on resetting your password!

Back to Login

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Reset Password

Username

dmkriete@comcast.net

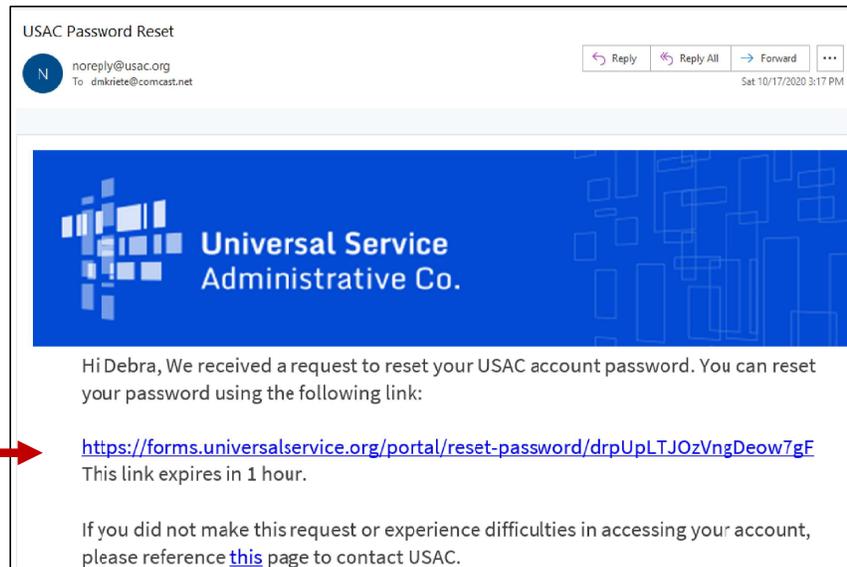
Reset via Email

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Initial MFA Set Up – Reset Password

- Check email for USAC Password Reset message from noreply@usac.org
- **Link is valid only for 1 hour**

Select Link



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Initial MFA Set Up – Reset Password

Enter desired password & click **Reset Password** button again

Password Requirements:

- **At least 8 characters**
- **One uppercase**
- **One lowercase**
- **One special character**
- **Cannot be any of your last 8 passwords**

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Reset your password

Password requirements: at least 8 characters, one uppercase, one lowercase, one number, one special character and cannot be any of your last 8 passwords.

New password

Repeat password

Reset Password

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MFA Initial Set-Up – Authenticate Email

System will now authenticate your email address.

Note: Email address is pre-populated in text box (only a portion will be shown).

Select **Send Email** to have the authentication code sent to your email address.

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Email Authentication

USAC requires multifactor authentication to add an additional layer of security when signing in to your account.

Email Address

d...e@comcast.net

Send Email

Sign out

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Initial Set-Up: E-mail Authentication

Next: Check your email for a verification code. E-mail will look like this:

One-time verification code

USAC <noreply@usac.org>
To: dm1010e@comcast.net

Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) - Prod - Action Required: One-time verification code

Hi Debra,

You are receiving this email because a request was made for a one-time code that can be used for authentication.

Please enter the following code for verification:

821709

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Email Authentication

USAC requires multifactor authentication to add an additional layer of security when signing in to your account.

Passcode has been sent to the following email address!

Email Address

d...e@comcast.net

Enter passcode

821709 Re-send Email

Verify

Next: Enter the verification code and select **Verify**.

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Dashboard: Only Access One System?

If your email address is associated with only EPC or the BEAR system, you will see this message on your dashboard:

Select **Continue** to proceed to your designated system:

Or select **Manage My Authentication Settings** to add phone text authentication or an additional e-mail address authentication:

Make Your Selection

- Select **Continue** to go to your program's system.
- Select **Manage My Authentication Settings** to update either your email address or phone number to access your account.

[Manage My Authentication Settings](#) [Continue](#)

Dashboard View

Upcoming Dates

Dashboard will show systems for which you have access:

- To enter **EPC**, click [here](#)
- As of 11/7/2023, BEARs will be filed in EPC and this option will likely be removed
- To enter ECF, click [here](#)

Schools and Libraries

- E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) - E-rate Program participants use the E-rate Productivity Center to manage program processes, receive notifications and to contact customer service.
- FCC Form 472 (BEAR) - Applicants file an FCC Form 472 (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form) to request reimbursement from USAC for the discount amount of the eligible products or services that the applicant has received and paid for in full.
- Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) - Emergency Connectivity Fund participants use the ECF Portal to submit applications and review notifications regarding their program activities. Using this link, schools and libraries can also access the FCC Form 472 (BEAR) and service providers can access the FCC Form 474 (SPI) to request ECF reimbursement.

Help?

- Send us a message [Click here](#)
- Call us (888) 641-8722

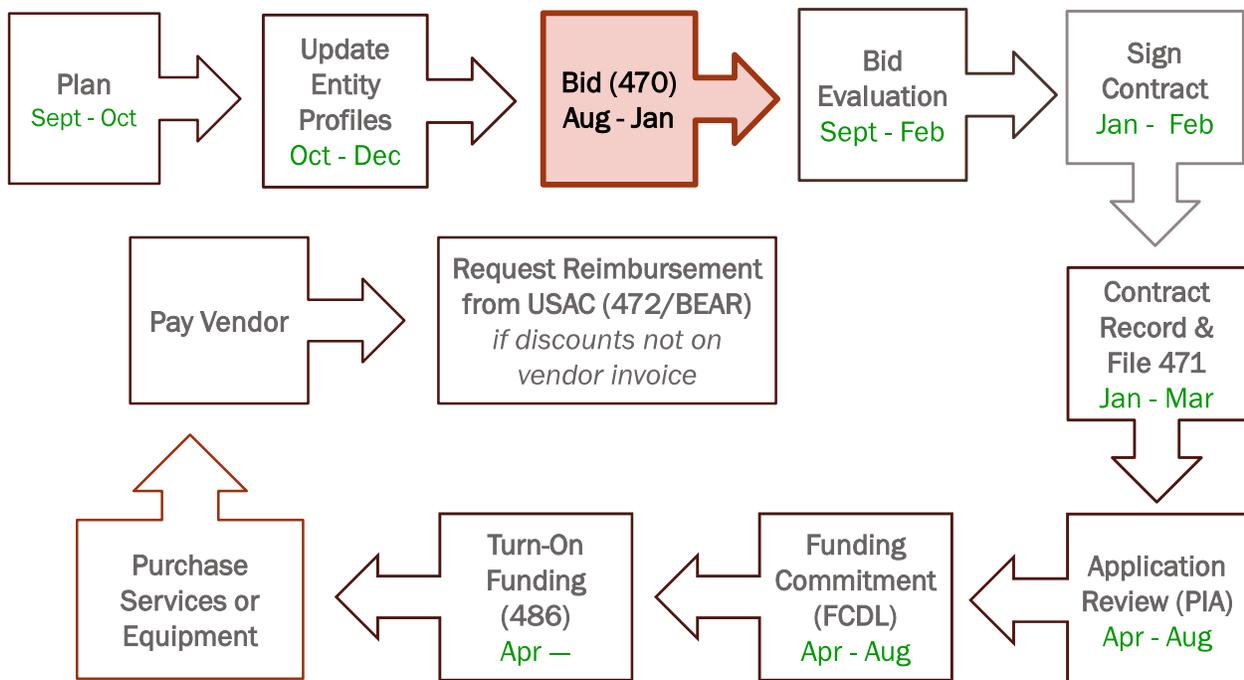
EPC will also include the BEAR form as of 11/7/2023



Form 470 Bidding

COMPETITIVE BIDDING
ONLINE FORM

Where we are:



Form 470 is required for:

- New service or equipment
- Existing service under contract that will expire before June 30, 2025
- Month to month non-contract existing service

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When a Form 470 is NOT required

- **Multi-year contract** that will be in effect through at least 6/30/2025 and was previously bid on a form 470
- Contract expires 6/30/2025 but has specific years of **voluntary extensions noted in the contract**
 - Need to execute a written amendment/extension before filing 471
- **Commercially Available Business Internet Service**
 - Publicly available to non-residential customers (such as enterprise, small business, or other government customers) in the same form and at the same rates that it is offered to schools or libraries
 - 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
 - Service must provide bandwidth speeds of at least 100 Mbps downstream and 10 Mbps upstream

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Preferred Manufacturers *or Equivalent*

- For any equipment or service, you may state your preferred manufacturer but must also explicitly state “*or equivalent*”
- The online filing system for C2 has a dropdown list of manufacturers to choose from
- If your preferred manufacturer isn’t listed choose the **Other** option and be sure include “or equivalent”
- Information for narrative text box
- You may require vendors to submit evidence of equivalent features
- You may list your existing equipment and require new equipment to be compatible and interoperable
- Both these requirements may be grounds for disqualification if a bid fails to meet either or both requirement

Requests for Proposal

- Request for Proposal is any supplemental document that an Applicant shares with Vendors in addition to posting a Form 470
- E-rate does not mandate the use of an RFP except for dark fiber or self-construction of fiber procurements
- RFPs are not required by state law
- Category 2 cabling/wiring projects may benefit from a RFP and other Category 2 data network projects, to describe your needs and requirements in more detail than the Form 470 allows
- Must decide **prior to** preparing your Form 470 to issue an RFP
- RFP documents must be uploaded when preparing Form 470
- Additional information provided during bidding period must also be uploaded
- If significant “cardinal” changes are made to your RFP, you need to either post a NEW Form 470 or EXTEND the bidding period to be 28 days from the date when the significant changes were made

Consultants

- E-rate Consultants assist applicants – usually fee-for-service – with E-rate requirements
- Applicant must sign a Letter of Agency to authorize Consultant to file forms ahead time
- Consultant must obtain a Consultant Registration #
- Applicant must link the CRN in the Applicant's EPC portal
- Consultant is prohibited from being the EPC Account Administrator
- Consultant **must** be completely independent of any service provider and have no conflict of interest
- Consultant may not select vendors on behalf of Applicant

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Important Bidding Info for 470

- Set deadline for accepting bids that is at least 28 days from the date of posting of Form 470
- State that you reserve the right to reject late bids
- Specify what information must be included in the bid. For example:
 - Price quote for specific equipment/service listed on Form 470
 - Firm quote with no contingencies such as site survey
 - Vendor must provide SPIN
 - If bidder is submitting on behalf of Vendor, bidder must provide documentation to verify Vendor has authorized and will honor bid
 - Vendor's standard terms and conditions
 - Proof of equivalency of alternative manufacturer's equipment
- Itemize any disqualification factors
 - Does Vendor need to be located nearby?
 - If requesting installation, must Vendor be willing and able to provide these services?
 - Must Vendor provide discounted bills {Is applicant willing to wait for FCDL?}

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Important Bidding Info for 470

(continued)

Specify who and how vendors should contact you with any questions.

- Who will be responsible for answering questions?
- Do you want the vendor to email you or call you?
- **Consideration** – If you are assisted by a consultant, require questions and bids to be sent to both an employee with the applicant and the consultant and require consultant to copy you on responses and other communications with vendors
 - This ensures you will have a record of all communications
 - This ensures that you will receive all bids and be able to retain them in compliance with E-rate record retention



Ultimately the responsibility for complying with bidding requirements and record retention falls to the Applicant. All bids, winning and losing and all vendor communications must be retained for 10 years from the end of the service delivery period. {September 30, 2035}

Open and Fair Bidding Required

Open means no secrets.

- Share same information with **all** prospective bidders
 - This is the reason for RFP upload requirement
- No bidder should have access to 'inside' information that provides one bidder with an unfair advantage over other bidders
- Pre-bidding discussions must be neutral

Fair means bidders are treated the same

- No bidder has advance knowledge of the project information

Importance of Open & Fair Bidding

Careful review by SLD to ensure compliance

- Non-compliant bidding → funding denials
- If detected after funding approval → Rescission & repayment required

Disgruntled bidder may become a whistleblower

- All allegations of unfair bidding practices are investigated thoroughly
- Form 471 applications are subjected to heightened scrutiny
- Delay in processing Form 471 and receiving funding approval
- Payment of BEAR reimbursements or SPIs are held until investigation is completed

Vendor Communications

- Applicants may reach out to E-rate vendors and notify them of the Form 470 during 28-day bidding period in a neutral manner
- Detailed conversations with vendors about their products and services should not occur during bidding period
- Vendors are permitted to contact applicants for more information about the pending Form 470
- When contacted by a vendor, you must indicate your willingness to receive a proposal for services listed on Form 470
- *You CANNOT say you are just going to stay with your current vendor – this is a competitive bidding violation and could lead to denial of your funding application!*

Answering Vendor Inquiries

- General rules
 - Keep all emails received to and from vendors
 - If you rely on phone calls, keep log of phone calls and information discussed
- Require vendors to follow instructions set forth on the Form 470 to ask questions
- Ask vendors to send questions via email and answer via email to keep a record
- If another vendor contacts you with questions, be sure to email the answers to all vendors that have contacted you previously
- If question is already addressed in your Form 470/RFP, direct the vendor to the information
- If question seems off-topic, ask vendor about relevance of information and then determine whether to answer
- If question asks for information not available to you, explain this and ask whether there is some other information that could be provided to answer the vendor's inquiry

57

Vendor Meetings

Prior to posting Form 470

- OK, but no sharing of 'inside information'
- Learning about products and services is fine
- Careful about obtaining equipment lists that find their way onto the Form 470
- Be mindful of appearances to other potential bidders

During Form 470 bidding period

- Not required and IMO not a good idea
- Suggestion – decline request, explain intent is to ensure open and fair process, after reviewing bids, if you have questions, you will then contact the bidder

Remember – you want to avoid any appearance of favoring one vendor over another



58

Handling Auto-Bids

Some vendors will generate a standard bid response – an ‘auto-bid’ without regard for specific requirements or information on the Form 470

Change in guidance from prior years: You should look at these bids and not automatically reject them without review

- Review for compliance with minimum bid requirements
 - If bid fails minimum bid requirements, disqualify
 - Keep record of areas where bid does not comply with Form 470 minimum bid requirements

59

?? about Open & Fair Bidding

If you have any concerns that your bidding process to date does not adhere to the open & fair bidding standard --

- Start over and post new Form 470 – provided your new Form 470 is posted in time to meet 28-day minimum bidding period.
- Your existing Form 470 cannot be canceled officially or taken down off the web site
- However, you can modify the nickname of the 470 and write the word “cancelled” as part of the new description
- Notify vendors that have contacted you that you are starting over & email the new Form 470 to them

Starting early with posting your Form 470 allows you to have time to start over if you need to

60

Form 470 Reminders

All service requests for both C1 and C2 may be on the same Form 470

Any supplemental information to be shared with vendors that is not on the Form 470 is considered a **Request for Proposal**

- The document must be prepared before starting the Form 470 and uploaded as part of the Form 470
- RFPs are only mandatory for dark fiber, self-provisioning and C1 network equipment
- If information is updated or added to after the Form 470 is first submitted, the updated info must be uploaded, and the 28-day bidding period must be restarted

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Form 470 Reminders (continued)

In the narrative text box, provide details about your service requests to help vendors prepare knowledgeable proposals

- For example, name and address of buildings needing the service

Whether you want MTM or contract service

- If contract service is requested, do you want voluntary extension options?
- What is the initial term of the contract you want?
 - Prices may be different depending on length of initial term

List disqualification factors

- Although it's mentioned as a suggestion, other E-rate program guidance says it's a **mandatory** requirement for any disqualification factors to be listed in Form 470

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Form 470 Deadline Not Yet Known

The last day to submit a Form 470 is 29 days prior to the Form 471 filing window deadline

The dates for the Form 471 filing window have not yet been announced formally

- Likely to be around January 14 – March 24
- If 471 deadline is March 24th, 470 deadline will be February 24th

Usually the 471 deadline is the 3^d or 4th week of March

Form 470 deadline is likely to be 3^d or 4th week of February

Don't wait – file Form 470 in November or December to provide sufficient time for next steps

File Form 470 in EPC

My Applicant Landing Page



Training
Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Welcome, Lawrence School District!

[Funding Request Report](#) | [FCC Form 470](#) | [FCC Form 471](#) | [FCC Form 486](#) | [Appeal](#) | [IDD Extension](#) | [FCC Form 500](#) | [SPIN Change](#) | [Service Substitution](#) | [Manage Users](#) | [Manage Organizations](#) | [USAC Website](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#)

Start from the Landing Page
Choose Form 470

FCC Form 470 - Funding Year 2021

Basic Information | Service Requests | Technical Contact Information | Procurement Information | FCC Form 470 Review | Certifications & Signature

> FCC Notice Required By The Paperwork Reduction Act (OMB Control Number: 3060-0806)

▼ Billed Entity Information

Lawrence School District
100 Main Street
Lead, SD 57754
555-555-1231
school.district7.user1@mailinator.com

Billed Entity Number: 120
FCC Registration Number: 1231231230

Application Nickname
Please enter an application nickname

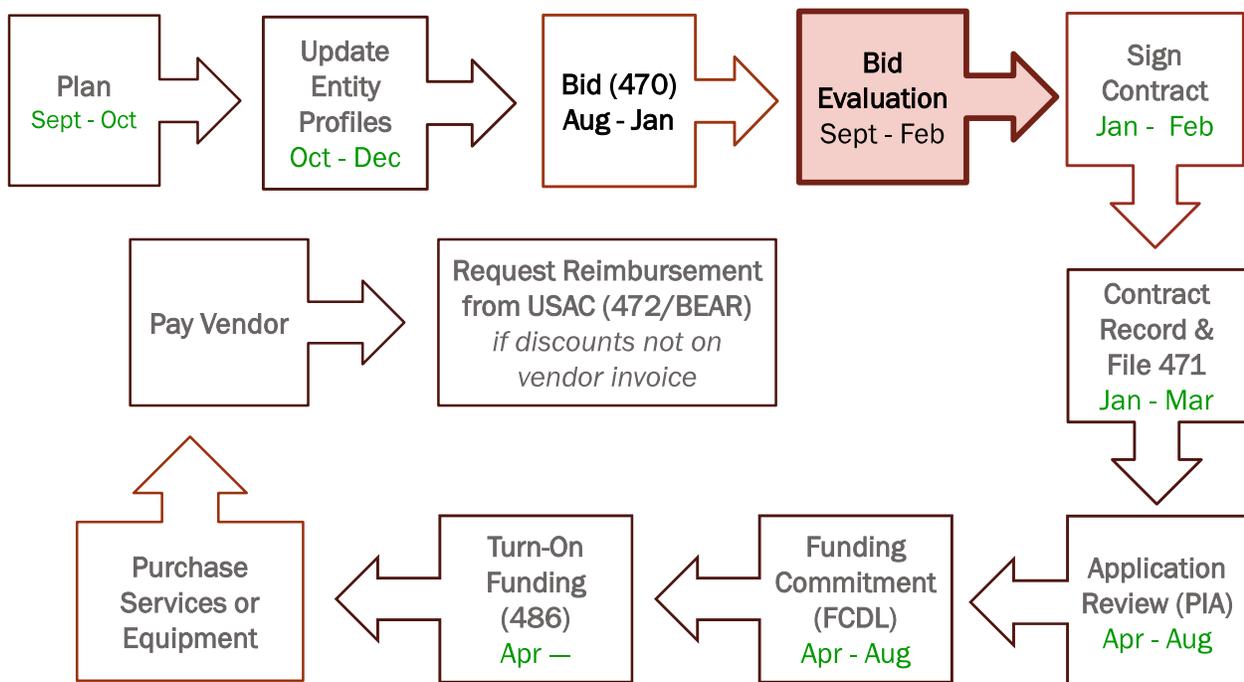
Lawrence SD FY 2021 470 **Create meaningful nickname to help you find your form in EPC**

[DISCARD FORM](#) [SAVE & SHARE](#) [SAVE & CONTINUE](#)



Bid Evaluation

Where we are:



Overview

After 470 is posted for at least 28 days, it's time to evaluate bids.

- Rely on the deadline set forth in your Form 470 if it was later than the minimum 28 day waiting period

Applicants must perform bid evaluation and make vendor selection.

- Consultant may make recommendations and provide guidance, but the applicant must make decisions

Review proposals to verify compliance with minimum bid requirements.

- Keep record of reasons for disqualification of any non-compliant bids

If late bids were submitted, verify Form 470 minimum bid requirements mandated hard deadline for bids

- If so, you can disqualify late bids
- If you prefer, you may consider these proposals, but you must consider all late bids up to when you begin your bid evaluation.
- If Form 470 (or RFP) was silent, consider all bids received until the date you begin your bid evaluation

4 Different Scenarios

1. No proposal received for **existing** service
2. No proposal received for a **new** service or equipment request
3. **One proposal** received for a service request
4. **Two or more proposals** received for same service request

No Bid Received – Existing Service

- Verify existing vendor will continue to provide the service
- Document the vendor selection by creating a “No Bid” memo or email
- Necessary to ensure documentation is clear on your decision-making process for selecting the vendor
- If existing vendor will not offer same service next year, proceed to next scenario

No Bid – New Service/Equipment

- Form 470 requested new service or equipment, and no vendor submitted a bid
- Applicant should contact one or more E-rate vendors and request a bid/proposal

Single Bid Received

- Must ensure the proposal is reasonably priced and therefore cost-effective
- Conduct independent price research online and save documentation
- If price is reasonable, then prepare memo to the file explaining your decision-making process
- If price is not reasonable, solicit bid from other vendor(s) and review price reasonableness and document process

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Evaluation of 2 or More Bids

- Must create and complete formal bid evaluation matrix
- E-rate rules require the selection of the most cost-effective bidder
- Price of E-rate eligible services or equipment must be the most heavily weighted factor
- **Cost-effective** does not necessarily mean lowest price
- Non-cost factors may also be evaluated
- Ineligible costs may also be considered but not as heavily weighted as eligible costs

72

C2 Alternative Manufacturer Bids

- 470s that stated a specific manufacturer preference are required to consider proposals for other manufacturers' equipment/service
- Review documentation submitted by vendor and determine -
 - Initially, was the required information submitted and met minimum bid qualifications?
 - Is equipment comparable?
 - Is equipment interoperable with existing equipment?
 - Document your review, analysis and conclusions
 - These considerations may be reflected in the bid evaluation

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Bid Evaluation Matrix

- E-rate **eligible price** must be the most heavily weighted factor
- **Price of ineligible items** may be a separate category
- Other factors could include -
 - Prior experience including past performance
 - Personnel qualifications including technical excellence
 - Management capability including schedule compliance
 - Local vendor
 - Technical solution

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Sample Evaluation – Ex. 1

Factor	Maximum # Points
Price of the eligible products and services	50
Technical solution <i>(Equivalence, compatibility and interoperability of equipment with existing equipment)</i>	20
Ineligible cost factors <i>(Additional costs not paid by E-rate to implement solution)</i>	20
Management capability <i>(Personnel qualifications, prior experience)</i>	10
Total Available Points	100

75

Sample Evaluation – Ex. 2

Factor	Maximum # Points
Price of the eligible products and services	50
Management capability <i>(Personnel qualifications, prior experience)</i>	25
Technical solution <i>(Equivalence, compatibility and interoperability of equipment with existing equipment)</i>	10
Local Vendor	15
Total Available Points	100

Also write notes in evaluation document to explain scoring, strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.

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Sample Evaluation – Ex. 3

Factor	Maximum # Points
Price of the eligible products and services	30
Prior experience	25
Personnel qualifications	20
Management capability	15
Local Vendor	10
Total Available Points	100

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Price Formula Recommendation

- Calculate a weight (percentage) based on the difference between a proposal's cost and the lowest proposal's cost.
- Then multiply the percentage by total number of points for price.

Description	Possible Points	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
Total E-rate Eligible Cost		\$600	\$800	1200
% to Lowest Bid Cost Low Bid Cost / Bid Cost		100% (600/600)	75% (600/800)	50% (600/1200)
Weighted Cost	60	60	45	30

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Bid Evaluation Matrix Example

Applicant Name	Lawrence School District			
Form 470 #	210000092			
Service/Equipment Description	Category 2 Wireless Equipment			
Description	Possible Points	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
Total Cost of Eligible Goods/Services		\$600	\$800	\$1,200
% to Lowest bid (low bid cost/bid cost)		100%	75%	50%
Weighted Cost (possible points * % to low bid)	50	50	38	25
Technical Solution	15	15	5	15
Vendor qualifications and references	10	0	10	10
Ineligible Costs	15	15	0	15
Prior experience with Applicant	10	0	10	10
Totals	100	80	62.5	75

•Price was scored using the formula set forth above.

•Technical Solution: Vendors A and C quoted preferred manufacturer and received the maximum points. Vendor B offered a different manufacturer's solution that was not as robust.

•Qualifications and references: Vendor A received 0 points because Applicant did not know of the vendor and the vendor failed to provide references as requested by the Applicant in the Form 470. Vendors B and C are familiar to Applicant and also provided the required references.

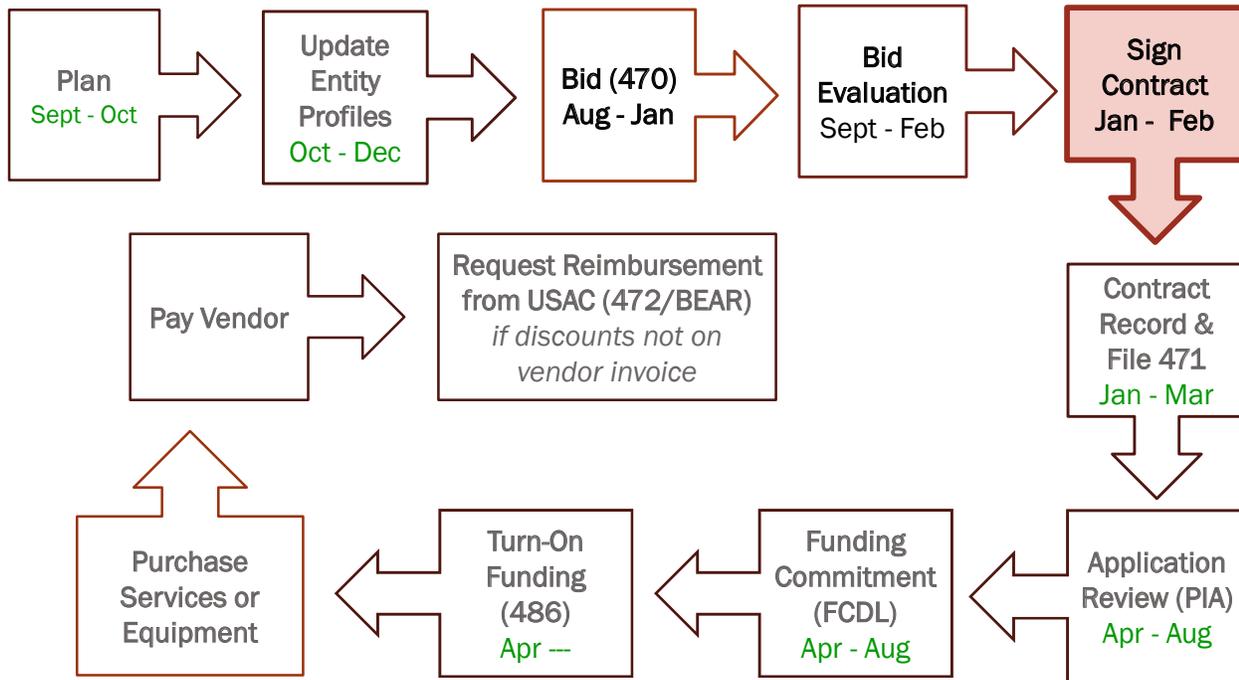
•Ineligible costs: No costs incurred with Vendor A's and C's solution because Applicant already has training. Applicant will incur training costs to be able to use Vendor B's proposed solution.

•Prior experience: Vendor A has not worked for the Applicant and therefore has no experience, and Vendors B and C received 10 points because each had performed satisfactory work for the Applicant previously.



Contracts

Where we are:



81

When **C1** Contracts are required

- New Category 1 services that are not MTM
 - Posted a FY 2024 Form 470
- Amending existing Category 1 contract to add additional service quantity or extend term
- Original contract must allow for the amendment
 - Language was included on Form 470 and in contract for additional service and/or specific # years of voluntary extensions
 - Amendment should be in writing and signed by Applicant prior to completing Form 471
 - If time does not allow, send email to Vendor with information for amendment or extension

82

When **C2** Contracts are required

- All new Category 2 equipment and services require a signed contract
 - Posted a FY 2024 Form 470
 - One-time equipment purchases (Internal connections)
 - Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections
 - Managed Internal Broadband Services
- Rarely seen, but it's possible to amend BMIC and MIBS to extend term
 - Language must have been included on Form 470 and in original contract for voluntary extensions

83

Contract Timing & Steps

- **AFTER** 28 days from posting date of Form 470
- **AFTER** completion of bid evaluation and vendor selection
- Applicant Signature **BEFORE** filing 471
- Contract Record created **BEFORE** filing 471

84

Planning Considerations

- Contract language draft
 - From vendor?
 - From you?
- Do you need internal approvals before signing the contract(s)?
 - Legal review?
 - Board approval?
- Incorporate step(s) into your timeline

85

Step by Step

- Bid evaluation completed
 - Does bid evaluation need internal approval?
- Notify winning and losing bidders
 - Can be done via email
 - Ask winning bidder to provide a contract or quote that is suitable for signing OR
 - Provide your own draft contract

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C1 Recurring Services Contracts

– Minimum Requirements

- Vendor Name – verify the name matches the vendor’s SPIN
 - Some vendors use a “D/B/A” (doing business as) name that is different from legal name.
- Applicant Name
- Contract initial term – use July 1 of the funding year as start date and June 30 of the expiration year.
- Describe service being purchased.
 - Make sure this matches your Form 470 to ensure E-rate discount funding approval.

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C1 Recurring Services Contracts

– Other Info to Include

- Include contract extension options
 - Do not agree to auto-renewals because they are not E-rate compliant
- Specify optional bandwidth increases and associated prices
- Itemize service locations – name and address
- Specify price of the service & whether taxes are extra; if extra obtain email estimate from vendor
- Specify discounted bills if essential to your school or library

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C2 Equipment Contracts

- Vendor Name – verify the name matches the vendor’s SPIN
 - Some vendors use a “D/B/A” (doing business as) name that is different from legal name
- Applicant Name
- Contract initial term – use 4/1/2024 as start date and 9/30/2025 for expiration
- Itemize make, model, quantity, unit cost and extended cost being purchased
 - Make sure this matches your Form 470 to ensure E-rate discount funding approval

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C2 Equipment Contracts

- Include contract extension option
 - “Applicant has the option to voluntarily extend the term of the contract for one year to align with E-rate funding approval”
- Itemize any taxes and surcharges
- Itemize shipping charges if applicable
- Specify discounted bills if essential to your school or library
- Signature of school/library official required prior to submitting Form 471
 - If time permits insist on vendor signature before 471 submission to ensure no last-minute changes

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C2 Equipment Contracts

E-rate approval contingency

- If you don't want to purchase the equipment unless E-rate funding is approved, include contingency
 - "This contract is contingent upon successful receipt of E-rate funding commitment letter, board budget approval and a written notice to proceed from the customer. Customer may choose to waive the E-rate funding approval contingency in which Customer will be responsible for paying the full cost and will submit for E-rate reimbursement upon receipt of E-rate funding commitment letter."

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C2 BMIC & MIBS Contracts

- BMIC – Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections
- MIBS – Managed Internal Broadband Services
- Both types of services are recurring services
 - Contract term should begin 7/1 of funding year, and end 6/30 of the year in which initial term ends

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BMIC & MIBS Contracts

- List covered equipment
 - Make and model number, quantity
 - Must separate out any ineligible equipment and associated service costs
- BMIC E-rate compliant scope of services
 - Repair and upkeep of eligible hardware
 - Wire and cable maintenance
 - Configuration changes
 - Basic technical support including online and telephone-based technical support
 - Software upgrades and patches including bug fixes and security patches

MIBS Scope of Services

- Operation, management, and monitoring of eligible broadband internal connections
- Management and operation of the LAN/WLAN, including installation, activation, and initial configuration of eligible components and on-site training on the use of eligible equipment
- Specify equipment that is being leased from MIBS vendor (if any)

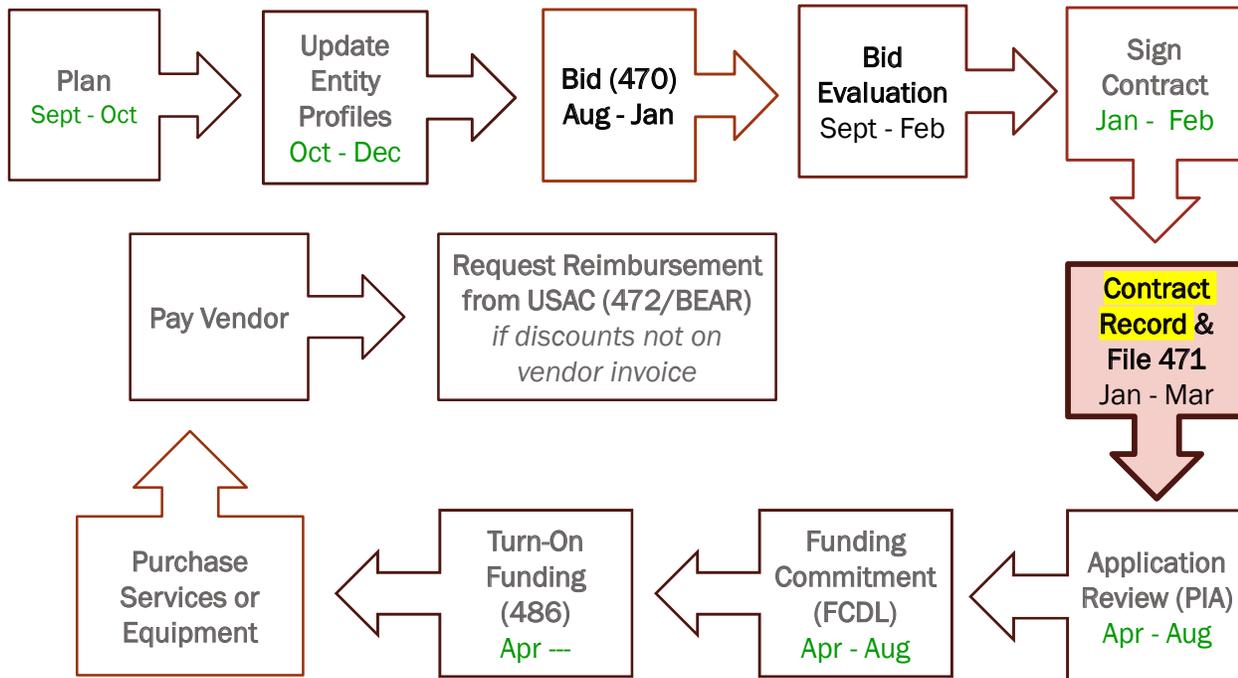
Contract Award Date

- EPC will ask for contract award date
 - Rely on date that applicant signed contract
- Signature/date of school/library official required prior to submitting Form 471
 - If time permits insist on vendor signature before 471 submission to ensure no last-minute changes



Creating Contract Record in EPC

Where we are:



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Create Contract Record in EPC

- Enter information about new contracts inside EPC before starting form 471
- Create new record if you discover an error on a previous EPC contract record that was created and will be listed on the FY 2024 form 471
- Do NOT create a new contract record for an extension of a contract that already has its own contract record.
- Detailed instructions on creating a contract record are in Section 9 of the FY 2024 E-rate Resource Manual
 - Beginning at page 283

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Navigation to “Manage Contracts”

Click on the “Manage Contracts” button

Records / Applicant Entities
#125300 - MCGUFFEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Summary Customer Service Modifications Additional Information Discount Rate **Contracts** FCC Forms FRN Appeals News Related Actions

MANAGE CONTRACTS

Manage Contracts

Contracts - MCGUFFEY SCHOOL DISTRICT (BEN: 125300)

Use the dropdown to select the type of contract you would like to edit or remove. Click the Add a New Contract button at any time to create a new contract for your organization.

Contract Type

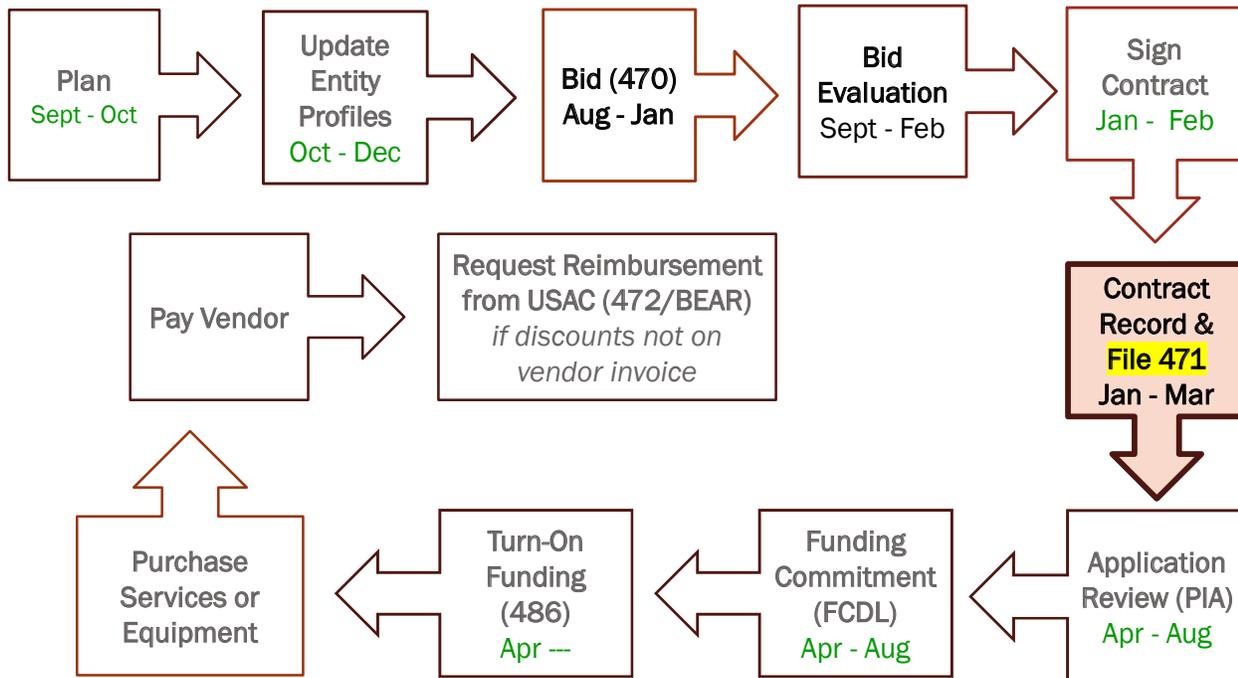
My Contract Drafts
You have no contract drafts for this organization. Click the Add a New Contract button to create a new contract.

Click on the “Add a New Contract” button



Form 471 Application

Where we are:



101

Overview

- Formally requests E-rate funding
- Itemizes services/equipment and associated costs
- Quantities discount calculation and amount of funding
- Filed by Billed Entity

102

When and How Many to File

- When to file:
 - Each year sometime in the fall, SLD announces the “window” period during which a Form 471 may be submitted – opening and closing dates
 - SLD prefers a deadline by late March in order to have time to process as many applications as possible prior to July 1 start of the funding year
- How many Form 471s to file?
 - Separate applications must be filed for C1 and C2
 - May include multiple “funding requests” in the same category on same application or you may opt to file one 471 for each funding request
 - Off-line templates available to pre-populate and upload to 471 to streamline form filing

103

Funding Requests

- Each separate vendor and contract require a funding request
- Different services or components in one contract will be line items in the same funding request
- Each C2 subcategory (IC, BMIC, MIBS) must be a separate funding request

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How to Prepare Form 471

- Need to quantify prediscount amount
- Quantify and itemize ineligible costs
- Use cost allocations if service/equipment has mixed eligibility
- Refer to Section 11 of E-rate Resource Manual for more information

105

Information to have on hand

- Contract, monthly bill
- Itemized amounts for base charges, taxes and surcharges
- Description of service/equipment
- File step by step guides in Section 11 of E-rate Resource Manual

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Form 471 Application Copy

Records / FCC Forms 471
3-29-16 Demonstration Form 471 - #161000592 Follow

Incomplete Certified **In Review** Outreach Wave Ready

Review Status: Awaiting Initial Review

Application Information

Nickname: 3-29-16 Demonstration Form 471	Created Date: 3/29/2016 11:13 AM EDT
Application Number: 161000592	Created By: Schod District 7 User 1
Funding Year: 2016	Certified Date: 3/29/2016 12:14 PM EDT
Window Status: In-Window	Certified By: Schod District 7 User 1
Category of Service: Category 1	Last Modified Date: 3/29/2016 12:14 PM EDT
	Last Modified By: Schod District 7 User 1

Billed Entity Information

Lawrence School District 100 Main Street Lead, SD 57754 555-555-1231 school.district7.user1@mailinator.com	Billed Entity Number: 120 FCC Registration Number: 1331231230 Applicant Type: School District
--	---

Consultant Information

There are currently no consulting firms associated with your organization. If this is an error, please update your organization profile.

Contact Information

Name: School District 7 User 1 Email: school.district7.user1@mailinator.com	Phone Number: 555-555-5556
--	----------------------------

Holiday / Summer Contact Information

There is no Holiday / Summer Contact Information for this FCC Form 471.

FCC Form 471 Generated Documents

FCC Form 471 Version
Original Version

Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the hyperlink “Original Version” and you will be prompted to save the 471 to your hard drive.

107

What is the RAL?

- RAL stands for Receipt Acknowledgement Letter
- RAL Modifications can be used to make certain changes, including adding omitted FRNs, to a submitted application
- Pre-commitment SPIN Changes and Service Substitutions also may be submitted via RAL corrections
- For a list of allowable corrections go to <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/competitive-bidding/ministerial-clerical-errors/>
- RALs may not be submitted after an FCDL has been issued
- RAL Mods are accessed in EPC by finding the submitted Form 471, and following the steps under Related Actions
- RAL Mod requests will be reviewed by PIA reviewers as they review your Form 471 application

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Where to Find the RAL

Receipt Acknowledgment Letter is paperless and issued electronically in EPC

Appears in Newsfeed

News

Tasks (5)

Records

Reports

Actions



E-rate Productivity Center This Receipt Acknowledgement Letter (RAL) is an acknowledgement that USAC has received MCGUFFEY SCHOOL DISTRICT's FCC Form 471 - 221018514 for Funding Year 2022 on 3/7/2022. Each service provider featured on this form will also be notified of the information submitted for the service provider.

It is important that you review this form now to make sure the products and services you have listed on your FCC Form 471 are correct and complete, and if necessary, take the appropriate corrective action as soon as possible. You are allowed to correct certain errors on your form, but not others. For fields that allow a correction, you will be able to edit the information in the form field directly. To determine what corrections are allowed and why, see the "List of Correctable Ministerial and Clerical Errors" on our website.

NEXT STEPS

- Gather the documentation you used to complete your form and the entries in your profile (e.g., NSLP numbers, list of entities receiving services, Category Two [...More](#))

McGuffey - Category 2 -... #125300 - MCGUFFEY S...

Monday, 9:54 AM ☆ 🔒 Comment More Info ▾

Click on the Form 471 Nickname to find the Form 471, or search feature at bottom of EPC Landing Page

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How to Make RAL Modifications

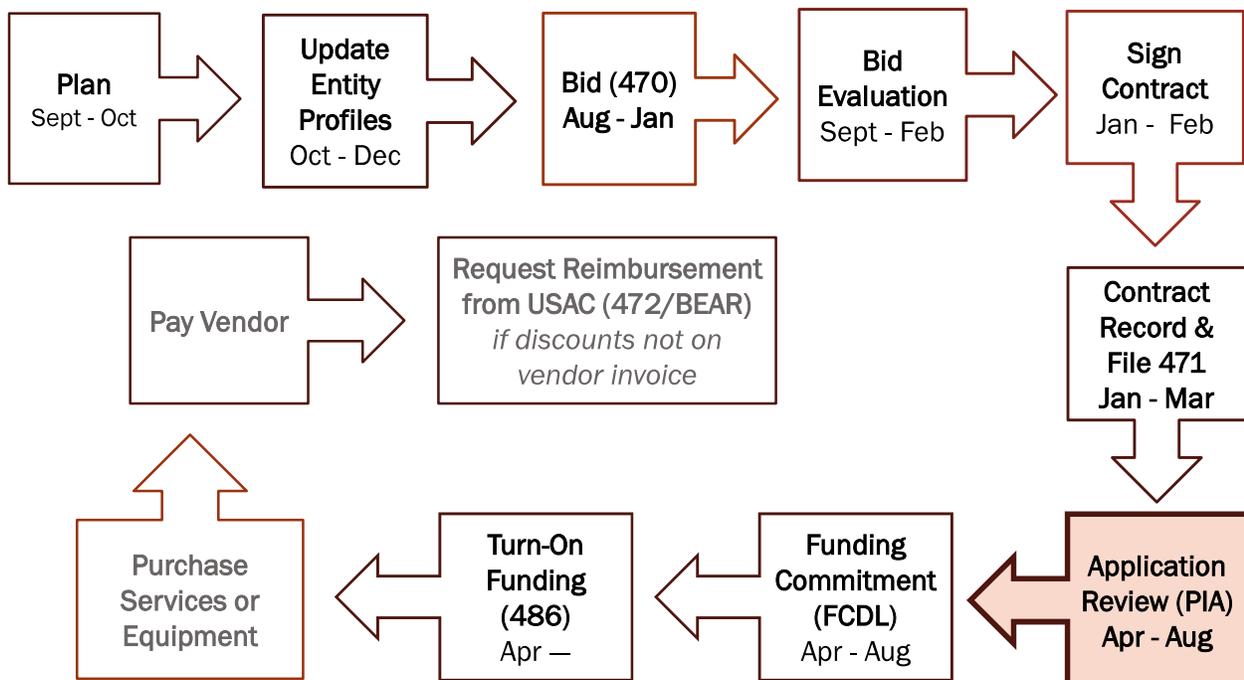
- When you enter the RAL Modification Module, you will be asked if you want to make changes to the “Application” or to the “Entity”
 - ‘Entity’ changes will relate just to your organization and your schools’ and libraries’ including their addresses, enrollment/NSLP data, etc.
 - Most applicants will choose ‘Application’ as this relates to all funding requests in your application
- Depending on which you choose, there will be sub-topics that also must be selected
- If you find that a needed change isn’t available to be made in the RAL module, simply create the change in a Word document, and upload it in the RAL Modification Module
- Comprehensive step by step guide for RAL Modifications is in Section 12 of E-rate Resource Manual

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Pre-funding Review (PIA)

Where we are:



Pre-funding Review – “PIA”

- After 471 is filed, USAC reviews each application for compliance with rules, called “Program Integrity Analysis” or “PIA”
 - Eligible Entities
 - Competitive Bidding
 - Eligible Services/Equipment
 - Appropriate Discount Level
 - Category 2 Budget Caps
 - Contract signed after 470 allowable contract date and prior to submission of 471
- All inquiries are communicated in the EPC portal and must be answered in the portal
- An email is sent to the 471-contact person to advise that the questions have been posted in EPC
- Refer to Section 12 in the E-rate Resource Manual for how to obtain and answer PIA inquiries in EPC

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Answering PIA Questions

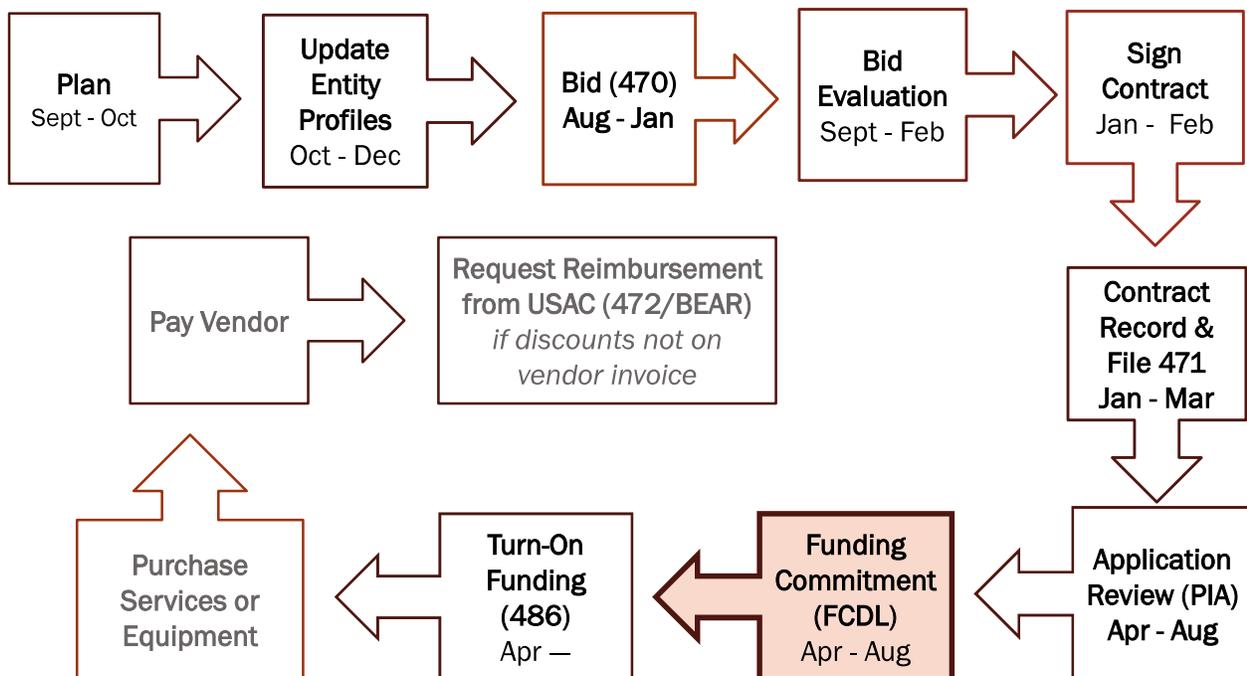
- 15-day response time, with a reminder on the 7th day
- Must respond in EPC and upload attachments if appropriate
- If you do not understand a question, email or call the reviewer and ask for clarification
- If you need more time, request a 7-day extension in EPC
- Do NOT ignore inquiries – potential denials due to not answering questions

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Funding Commitments

Where we are:



Funding Commitment Decision Letter

- FCDL = Funding Commitment Decision Letter
- Emailed to 471 contact person and Account Administrator with PDF and Excel file
- Informs you which funding requests are approved or denied
- Provides information for the next form - Form 486
- Can appeal if you don't agree with your decision
 - Must do so within 60 days
 - Must appeal first to SLD and then to FCC if SLD does not approve appeal

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View Your Funded Current Version of Form 471

▼ FCC Forms and Post-Commitment Requests

FCC Forms

Post-Commitment Requests

Form Type

Funding Year

Status All

Incomplete

Certified

Committed

Application Number	Nickname	Funding Year	Status	Certified Date
191009449	19-20 RWAN P2PVVC PTD	2019	Committed	2/26/2019 12:25 PM EST

FCC Form 471 Generated Documents

FCC Form 471 Version	Description
Original Version	This document contains information that was submitted to USAC upon certification of the FCC Form 471.
Current Version	This document contains the most recent commitment information up to when it was downloaded (8/10/2019 2:54 PM EDT).

The Current Version document can be downloaded again to include any updates made through post-commit requests (i.e., Appeals, FCC Forms 500, SPIN changes, Service Substitutions). **EPC will not save prior versions of the Current Version PDF.** Be sure to save the existing Current Version before updating.

[UPDATE CURRENT PDF](#)

Use this option if you have filed a post-commitment request that has been processed after the date listed for the current version of the 471.

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Generating PDF of Current Version

FCC Form 471 Generated Documents

FCC Form 471 Version	Description
Original Version	This document contains information that was submitted to USAC upon certification of the FCC Form 471.

In most cases, the Current Version FCC Form 471 document will be available in a few minutes. If this application has a large number of related entities, it may take much longer. Meanwhile, you can navigate away from this screen, and will receive a task once the document is ready.

The screenshot shows the Universal Service Administrative Co. interface. On the left, there is a logo and the text "Assigned to Me > Sent by Me". In the center, there is a task notification box with a checkmark icon, the text "Me", and "The Current Version FCC Form 471 document is ready" followed by "12 minutes ago" and a star icon. Below this, there is a navigation bar with "News", "Tasks (2)", "Records", "Reports", and "Actions". At the bottom, there is a green message box that says "You can now access the Current Version FCC Form 471 document from the Summary tab of the FCC Form 471 Record [191009449 Record]."

119

Viewing 471 Current Version

FCC Form 471 Generated Documents

FCC Form 471 Version	Description
Original Version	This document contains information that was submitted to USAC upon certification of the FCC Form 471.
Current Version	This document contains the most recent commitment information up to when it was downloaded (9/24/2019 8:44 AM EDT).

The Current Version document can be downloaded again to include any updates made through post-commit requests (i.e., Appeals, FCC Forms 500, SPIN changes, Service Substitutions). **EPC will not save prior versions of the Current Version PDF.** Be sure to save the existing Current Version before updating.

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Appeals

- All appeals, except for requests of waiver of FCC rules, must be filed with USAC first
- Requests for rule waivers should continue to be filed directly with the FCC because USAC does not have authority to waive FCC rules
- USAC goal is to process 90% of appeals within 90 days
- Step by step guide for filing appeals in EPC and with FCC is in Section 16 of E-rate Resource Manual

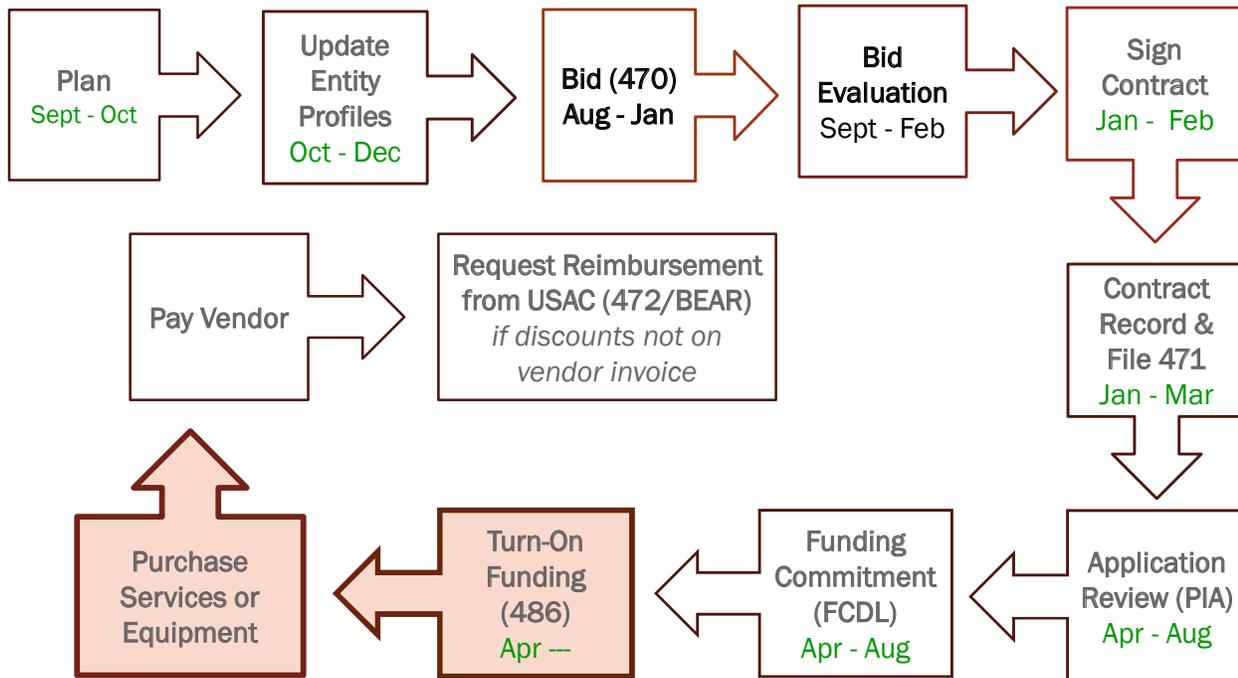
121



Form 486 Activating Services & Equipment

122

Where we are:



123

Form 486 – Turn on Funding

- Purpose of Form
- Signifies that it's OK for SLD to pay any invoices for that FRN
- Certifies CIPA compliance
- **Deadline:** Must be certified by the later of
 - 120 calendar days after the Service Start Date featured on the Form 486 or
 - 120 calendar days after the date of the FCDL
- File in EPC
- USAC then send Form 486 Approval Letter to Vendor and Applicant
- Will be delivered electronically inside EPC

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CIPA Requirements

- Any school or library receiving either Category 2 or Internet access funding must:
 - Filter all Internet access
 - Have an Internet Safety Policy that addresses required elements
 - Policy must have been adopted after public hearing
 - Recipients only receiving telecommunications services are exempt from E-rate CIPA compliance
- Consortium members submit Form 479 to consortium leader certifying compliance so consortium lead can submit Form 486

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CIPA Requirements for Schools' Online Safety Education

- Schools' (not libraries) Internet Safety Policies must include "... educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response."
- This means that schools are required to teach online safety to students as a prerequisite to receiving E-rate funding
- Local boards determine delivery of online safety/cyberbullying education
- Must be memorialized in board approved policy after providing opportunity for public input

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CIPA Documentation

- Notice of public hearing or public meeting (such as school board meeting) where CIPA policy was considered
- Agenda for meeting – show opportunity for public input/comment before adoption of CIPA policy
- Other documentation for opportunity for public comment
- Filtering records, purchase order
- Documentation of cyberbullying/appropriate online behavior education for all minors

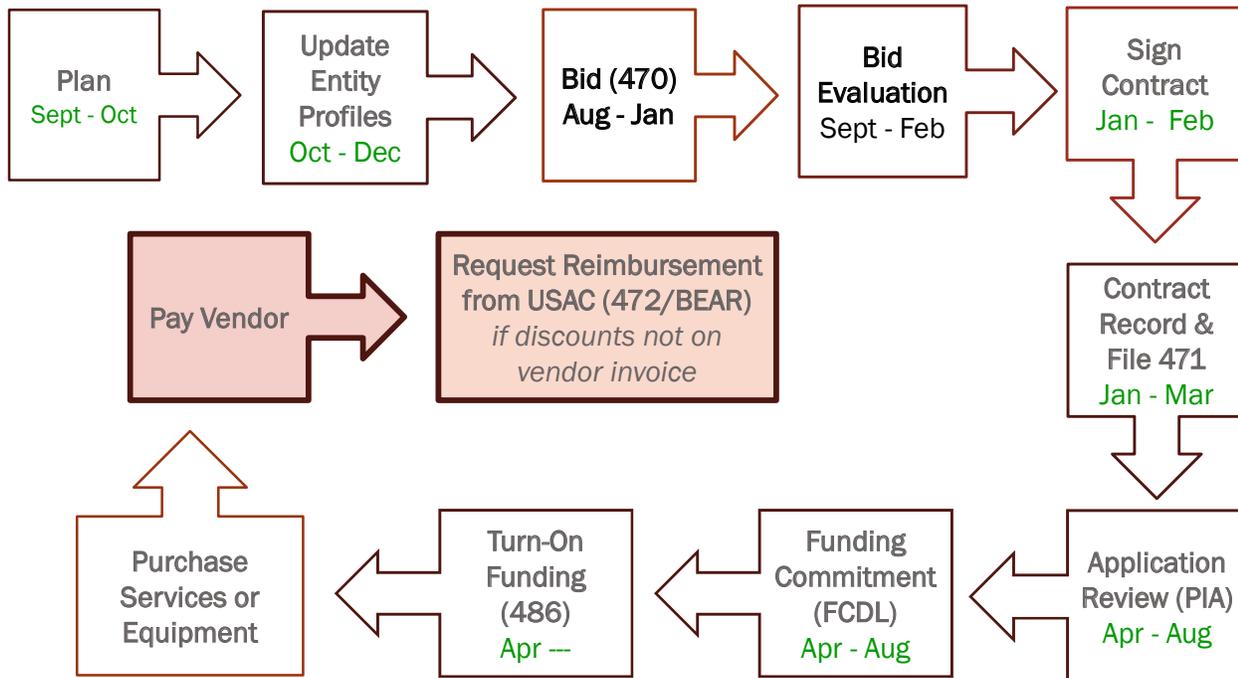
127



Receiving E-rate Funding

DISCOUNTED BILLS OR
REIMBURSEMENTS

Where we are:



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Receiving Your E-rate Discount Funding

Applicant has a choice

- Discounts on bills (vendor invoices USAC) or
- Reimbursement process (Applicant pays bills in full, then invoices USAC)

Must select one option for each funding request

If you want discounted bills, notify vendor of your preference on Form 470 and when you file Form 471

File Form 486 as soon as you are funded

Obtaining discounts is NOT automatic

Vendors sometimes have additional forms to complete to implement discounted billing

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Discounted Billing Method

- Discounts appear on Applicant's bill
- Service provider submits Form 474 to USAC after providing discounted bill
 - Service Provider Invoice Form (SPIF)
- Providers usually get reimbursed by USAC within 30 days from date of submission
- Applicants do nothing except make sure they are receiving the discounts they deserve on bills

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Reimbursement Method - BEAR

- Applicant pays bill in full
- Applicant submits Form 472 – BEAR Form for reimbursement
- Quarterly, semi-annually, or at end of year
- Complete one BEAR for each SPIN
- Calculated based on eligible charges on actual bills
- Strictly Enforced Deadline
 - October 28 (following close of funding year) for recurring services;
 - January 28 for non-recurring services/equipment

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Reimbursement Method - BEAR

- Each billed entity must submit FCC Form 498 to provide direct deposit bank information and submit bank account verification information
 - Must be done before beginning BEAR
- Effective 11/7/2023, Applicants will file BEARs within EPC as part of a new online filing system
 - No separate log-in into the BEAR system will be required
 - Must verify your user permissions in EPC authorize you to file and/or certify BEARs
- SLD will deposit reimbursements directly into bank account and send email with payment information
- Consult Section 17 of Resource Manual for FCC Form 498 guide
- A new BEAR guide will be circulated once the new system goes live

BEAR Notifications

- Electronic notification of payment sent via email sent to the FCC Form 498 Remittance Contact

<p>SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES BEAR PROGRAM REMITTANCE STATEMENT AS OF OCTOBER 10, 2016</p> <p>Attn: Debra M Kriete NEIU 19 Consortium</p> <p>RE: FCC Form 498 ID 443014785</p> <p>This notice provides an explanation of your entity's Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) payment for the following invoices.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Approved</p> <p>10/10/2016 143001398 Verizon Pennsylvania LLC, 2835021 IU19 RWAN-Vz PA 2015 \$229,983.60 Applicant Name:INTERMEDIATE UNIT 19;SLD Invoice Number:2446902;BEAR Letter Date:10/10/2016;Line Item Detail Number:8205345;Amount Requested:231311.40;Partial Paymnt, Inv > Remaining Commitment;1201;</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Date of Notice</td> <td>10/10/2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vendor SPIN</td> <td>143001398</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vendor Name</td> <td>Verizon Pennsylvania LLC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FRN</td> <td>2835021</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Applicant's BEAR Form ID</td> <td>APPLICANT BEAR ID</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Applicant Name</td> <td>APPLICANT NAME</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SLD Invoice Number (system assigned number)</td> <td>2446902</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date of BEAR Letter</td> <td>10/10/2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amount Requested for reimbursement</td> <td>\$231,911.40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amount of funding remaining in FRN available</td> <td>\$1201.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Approved Reimbursement Amount</td> <td>\$229,983.60</td> </tr> </table>	Date of Notice	10/10/2016	Vendor SPIN	143001398	Vendor Name	Verizon Pennsylvania LLC	FRN	2835021	Applicant's BEAR Form ID	APPLICANT BEAR ID	Applicant Name	APPLICANT NAME	SLD Invoice Number (system assigned number)	2446902	Date of BEAR Letter	10/10/2016	Amount Requested for reimbursement	\$231,911.40	Amount of funding remaining in FRN available	\$1201.00	Approved Reimbursement Amount	\$229,983.60
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Approved Reimbursement Amount	\$229,983.60																						

- BEAR Notification Letter is emailed to the BEAR contact person and the EPC account administrator
- Paper BEAR letters will be eliminated

BEAR Calculations

- Must be based on actual charges incurred
- The approved funding request amount is the cap amount that can be reimbursed
- Create a spreadsheet showing each month's total monthly charges
- Quantify ineligible charges and deduct them from the total monthly charges to arrive at the BEAR prediscount amount
- Some common ineligible charges for Category 1 services to look for -
 - Late payment or finance charges
 - Property tax surcharges
 - Administrative fee to collect universal service contribution
 - Paper statement fees
 - Equipment rental charges (on C1 bills)

Sample BEAR Calculation

Internet Account Month	Total Monthly Charge	Paper Statement Fee Ineligible - Deduction	Total Eligible Charges
July	\$200.10	\$2.75	\$197.35
Aug	\$200.20	\$2.75	\$197.45
Sept	\$200.30	\$2.75	\$197.55
Oct	\$200.20	\$2.75	\$197.45
Nov	\$201.30	\$2.75	\$198.55
Dec	\$203.30	\$2.75	\$200.55
Jan	\$202.20	\$2.75	\$199.45
Feb	\$201.30	\$2.75	\$198.55
Mar	\$200.30	\$2.75	\$197.55
Apr	\$203.20	\$2.75	\$200.45
May	\$200.10	\$2.75	\$197.35
June	\$203.50	\$2.75	\$200.75
Total Charges	\$2,416.00	\$33.00	\$2,383.00
Ineligible Charges	\$33.00		
Eligible Charges	\$2,383.00		
E-rate Discount	65%		
BEAR Amount	\$1,548.95		

Strict Invoicing Deadlines

- Only one 120-day invoice deadline extension will be granted if the request is made on or before the original invoice deadline (which is typically October 28 following the funding year)
- Late invoice deadline extension requests will not be approved by USAC
- Requests for extensions made after invoice deadline must be requested via a waiver request to the FCC
 - FCC will only grant requests where Applicants can prove truly extraordinary circumstances to justify a waiver

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Paying Your Share

- Applicants are required to pay non-discounted portion of cost
- Cannot be waived by the vendor
- Vendor cannot provide a “grant”
- Funding must be in budget or draft budget
- Must keep all invoices and copies of cancelled checks for 10 years after last day to receive service

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Gift Rule Restrictions

- All gifts from service providers to applicants are prohibited
 - except for:
 - Modest refreshments that are not offered as part of meal (e.g., coffee and donuts provided at a meeting) and items with little intrinsic value intended for presentation (e.g., certificates and plaques); and
 - Items that are worth \$20 or less (e.g., pencils, pens, hats, t-shirts, and other items worth less than \$20, including meals), provided those items do not exceed \$50 per employee from any one source per funding year

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What Exactly is a Gift?

- Gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan, discount, hospitality or any other thing of monetary value
- Includes services as well as gifts of training, transportation, local travel, lodgings and meals, whether provided in-kind by purchase of a ticket, payment in advance or reimbursement after the expense was incurred

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Charitable Contributions

- Service Providers can continue making charitable donations to E-rate eligible entities in the support of schools – including, for example, literacy programs, scholarships, and capital improvements – except if:
 - The gift is made in order to influence the competitive bidding process & increase need for E-rate funding

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Community Use of Services

- Schools may but are not required to permit general public to use the schools' Internet access during non-operating hours – at the school
- Usage is permitted only during a school's "non-operating" hours or summer
- School may not request E-rate funding for a higher level of service than would be required for educational purposes
- Schools may not charge for the use of the Internet access, but may charge reasonable fees to cover overhead costs from individuals that use the schools' services and facilities
- Organizations using a schools' services are permitted to recover related costs (e.g., "curriculum development and presentation costs") from attendees

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Community Use of Services

- Internet filtering rules must remain intact during use
- Rule in no way permits schools to share their bandwidth with other ineligible entities, such as an off-site after-school program at the YMCA or community center
- Also does not permit partially eligible entities, such as a Diocesan office that provides services to both schools and the church, to stop cost allocating the ineligible portion of Internet used during school hours

Document Retention

- Documents relating to E-rate must be retained for 10 years from the last date to receive service or service delivery deadline, whichever is later
- For multi-year contracts, contract documentation and bids must be kept from 10 years from the last date of service under the contract
- Alert business office that vendor bills must be kept for 10 years from the end of the funding year
- Electronic records storage is permissible

Questions?

Thank you!

Debra Kriete

dmkriete@comcast.net

888 232 0241