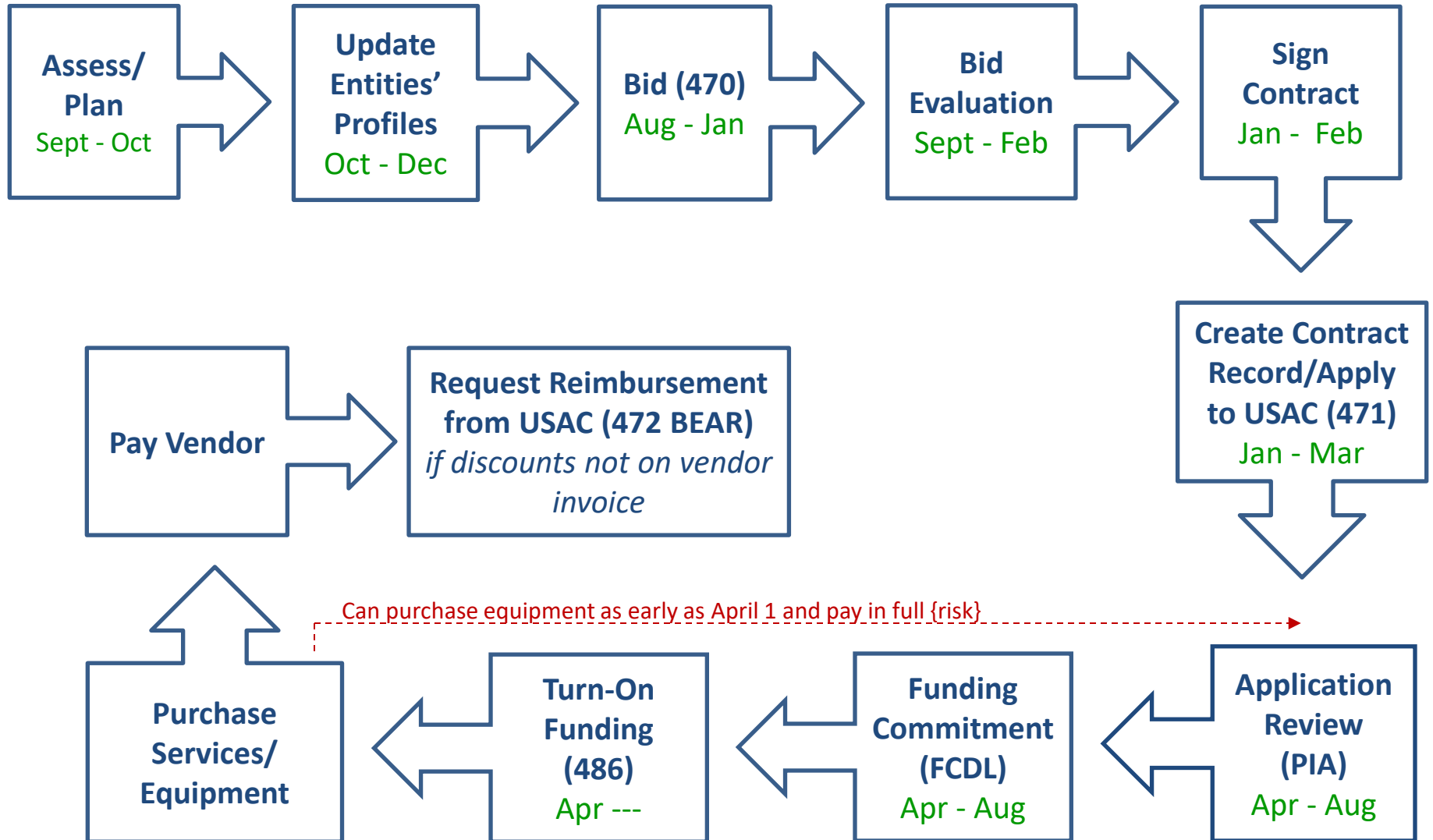


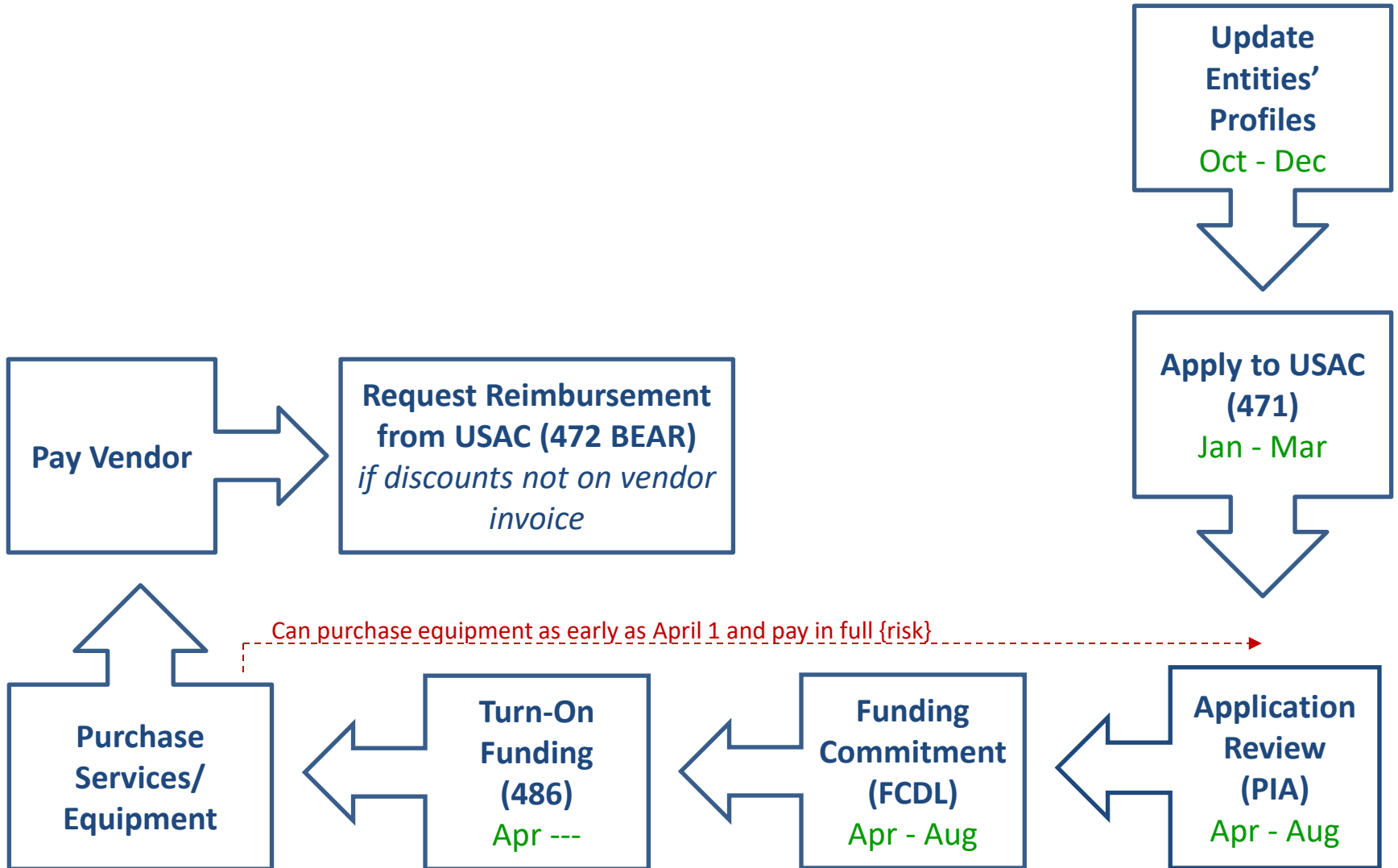
## E-rate Funding Years – Dates to Remember

	APPLICATION PROCESS				RECURRING SERVICES		NON-RECURRING EQUIPMENT/SERVICES	
	Admin Window EPC Profile Updates	Form 470 Competitive Bidding	Form 471 Application Window to Request Discounts	Form 486 Service Start Date + CIPA Certification	Delivery Dates (Category 1 or 2)	Form 472 BEAR Invoicing Deadline	Purchase/Installation Dates	Form 472 BEAR Invoicing Deadline
<b>FY 2026</b>	Oct. 15, 2025 – Jan. 9, 2025 <i>estimated – tbd</i>	Jul 1, 2025 – Feb. 25, 2025 <i>estimated - tbd</i>  (29 days before 471 deadline)	<i>TBD – second week of Jan 2026 to mid last week in March</i>	120 days from: FCDL or Service Start Date (whichever is later) <b>Oct. 28, 2026</b> for FCDLs received on or before 7/1/2026	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	Oct. 28, 2027	April 1, 2026 – Sept. 30, 2027	Jan. 28, 2028
<b>FY 2025</b>	Oct. 15, 2024 – Jan. 9, 2025	Sept. 19, 2024 – Feb. 26, 2025 (29 days before 471 deadline)	Jan. 15, 2025 – Mar. 26, 2025	120 days from: FCDL or Service Start Date (whichever is later) <b>Oct. 28, 2025</b> for FCDLs received on or before 7/1/2025	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026	Oct. 28, 2026	April 1, 2025 – Sept. 30, 2026	Jan. 28, 2027
<b>FY 2024</b>	Oct. 24, 2023 to Jan. 12, 2024	July 1, 2023 To Feb. 28, 2024 (29-days before 471 deadline)	Jan. 17, 2024 – Mar. 27, 2024	120 days from: FCDL or Service Start Date (whichever is later)	July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025	<b>Oct. 28, 2025</b>	April 1, 2024 to <b>Sept. 30, 2025</b>	<b>Jan. 28, 2026</b>
<b>Notes for FY 2026</b>		Don't bid if in an existing, E-rate-valid, multi-year contract that expires on or after June 2026	A 471 must be filed every year to receive \$\$	FCDL = Funding Commitment Decision Letter	Broadband, Internet, Maintenance Services are Recurring	May request one 120-day extension if submitted by BEAR deadline	Non-recurring = one-time purchases	May request one 120-day extension if submitted by BEAR deadline

# The E-Rate Process: New Contract



# The E-Rate Process: Existing Contract



### FUNDING YEAR 2026 APPLICATION CYCLE

Form	Description	FY 2026 - Non-Recurring Services/Equipment Purchases - April 1, 2026 - Sept 30, 2027																											
		FY 2026 - Recurring Services - July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027																											
		Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026	Feb 2026	Mar 2026	Apr 2026	May 2026	June 2026	July 2026	Aug 2026	Sept 2026	Oct 2026	Nov 2026	Dec 2026	Jan 2027	Feb 2027	Mar 2027	Apr 2027	May 2027	June 2027	July 2027	Aug 2027	Sept 2027	Oct 2027	Nov 2027	Dec 2027
470	Competitive Bidding Window (min. 29 days)	July 1, 2025- February 25, 2026 <i>(estimated)</i> estimated																											
AW	Administrative Window (EPC Profile Updates)	Oct. 15, 2025 - Jan. 8, 2026 <i>estimated</i>																											
	Newly Signed Vendor Contracts Uploaded to EPC																												
471	Funding Request Application Window				Jan. 14, 2026 - Mar. 25, 2027 <i>estimated</i>																								
PIA/F CDL	PIA Review/Funding Decision Letters (FCDL) Issued							April 2026 - Sept 1, 2026																					
486	CIPA Certification/Turn on Funding																												
472	BEAR Deadline - Recurring Services																										Oct 28		
	BEAR Deadline - Non-Recurring Services																										Jan 28		

**REMINDERS:**

- \* Form 470's should be filed before a new contract is signed.
- \* Form 470's must be posted for at least 29 days before bid evaluations are performed and the Form 471 is filed.
- \* Most public schools require board approval before contracts are signed.
- \* Contracts must be signed and uploaded into EPC prior to filing the Form 471.
- \* A Form 471 must be filed EVERY year to receive E-Rate funding.
- \* A 1-time, 120-day BEAR extension must be requested by the original BEAR deadline.
- \* Recurring Services = broadband, internet, maintenance services. 12 month funding year.
- \* Non-Recurring Services = 1-time equipment purchases/C1 installation charges. 18 month funding year.

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## PROGRAM BASICS

### E-RATE PROGRAM

One of the four universal service programs administered by USAC. Formally known as the Schools and Libraries Program, the program provides discounts to schools and libraries for eligible equipment and services.

### FUNDING YEAR (FY)

The funding year is a time during which program support is being provided. The FY begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the following calendar year.

### NEWS BRIEF

A monthly newsletter that provides up-to-date program information, including important dates, tips regarding the application process, and other breaking news.

### SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES PROGRAM (SL)

One of the four universal service programs administered by USAC.

### UNIVERSAL SERVICE

Universal service is the principle that all Americans should have access to communications services. Universal service is also the name of a fund and the category of FCC programs and policies to implement this principle.

### UNIVERSAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPANY (USAC)

An independent, not-for-profit corporation created by the FCC in 1997 to administer the four universal service programs which help provide communities across the country with access to affordable telecommunications services.

### UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND (USF)

Money collected from telecommunications companies and dedicated to fulfilling the goals of universal service. Under the authority of the 1996 Telecom Act, the FCC created the USF as well as the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), the organization charged with administering universal service. Companies make contributions to universal service based on revenues from providing international and interstate telecommunications services.

## TOOLS AND SYSTEMS

### E-FILE

USAC's online forms submission tool for service providers to submit and modify the FCC Forms 498 and 499. E-File is available at <https://forms.universalservice.org>. The E-Rate specific FCC Forms 473 (SPAC) and 474 (SPI) are filed in EPC.

### E-RATE PRODUCTIVITY CENTER (EPC)

EPC is the account and application management portal for the Schools and Libraries (E-Rate) program. E-Rate program participants use this tool to manage program processes, receive notifications, create and submit invoices, and to contact customer service.

### OPEN DATA

USAC Open Data is a web portal with datasets and tools available for E-Rate program data. The E-Rate section of the USAC Open Data website includes data related to FCC forms, invoices, entities, Category 2 budgets, and funding commitments. Users can view, search, filter, and manipulate the data in each dataset and extract that data in a variety of formats. Users can also extract data via API calls.

## FEDERAL ACTS, ORDERS, AND

## NOTICES

### CHILDREN'S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT (CIPA)

A law that mandates certain internet safety and filtering requirements for recipients of E-Rate program discounts for services other than telecommunications services.

### EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

The Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. Section §7801(19) and (45), provides the statutory definition of elementary and secondary schools.

### LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA)

The LSTA, 20 U.S.C. Section 9121 et seq., provides the statutory definition of a library.

### LOWEST CORRESPONDING PRICE (LCP)

The lowest price that a service provider charges to non-residential customers who are similarly situated to a particular E-Rate program applicant (school, library, or consortium) for similar services.

### NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING (NPRM)

A notice adopted by the Federal Communications Commission detailing proposed changes to FCC rules and policies and seeking public comment on the changes.

### PUBLIC NOTICE (PN)

A notice issued by the FCC to notify the public of an action taken, a change made, or an upcoming event.



## ROLES WITHIN AND AROUND THE PROGRAM

### 498 COMPANY OFFICER

The officer of a service provider company who is authorized to certify that data set forth in the FCC Form 498 is true, accurate, and complete. The 498 Company Officer would typically be president, vice president of operations, vice president of finance, comptroller, treasurer, or a comparable person.

### 499 COMPANY OFFICER

A person who occupies a position specified in the corporate by-laws (or partnership agreement), and would typically be president, vice president for operations, vice president for finance, comptroller, treasurer, or a comparable position. If the filer does not have one of these officers, then it must name its three most senior officers, including their titles. For a partnership, the managing partner(s) must be named. A sole proprietorship may list only one name.

### ACCOUNT ADMINISTRATOR

An EPC user who can manage users, permissions, and related entities for an organization such as a school, library, service provider, or consulting firm.

### ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

The relevant authority with responsibility for administration of the eligible school or library who must certify the status of the entity's compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) in order to receive universal service support.

### APPLICANT

The entity applying for universal service support. In E-Rate, the entity is a school, library, consortium, or other eligible entity that files program forms.

### BILLED ENTITY

The entity that receives the bill and pays for the supported service. A Billed Entity may be separate from the physical location receiving services.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The 20 members of the Board of Directors provide leadership and guidance in USAC's administration of universal service.

### COMMISSION

The short name for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). See "FCC."

### COMMON CARRIER

An organization recognized by a regulatory authority (such as a state public utility commission) to provide telecommunications services to all requesting parties, or an organization that holds itself out to provide such services to the public for a fee.

### CONSORTIUM

A consortium (plural consortia) is a group including eligible entities that apply together for funding.

### CONSULTANT

A company or individual (non-employee of the entity) selected to perform certain activities related to the application process on behalf of the applicant or service provider for a fee. A Letter of Agency (LOA) or consultant agreement must be in place before the consultant undertakes these activities.

### CONTRIBUTOR

A company that, based on the revenue reported on the FCC Forms 499-A/Q, is required to pay contributions directly to the universal service fund.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER (CSC)

A helpline available to assist applicants and service providers. You can call the CSC toll-free at (888) 203-8100. The CSC creates and responds to EPC customer service cases.

### DELEGATED USERS

The employee(s) of a service provider company authorized to enter and modify company information on FCC Forms 498 and 499 through the E-File application. See E-File above.

### EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY (ESA)

A regional public multiservice agency authorized by state statute to develop, manage, and provide services or programs to local educational agencies.

### ELIGIBLE ENTITY

An entity that meets the requirements for eligibility to participate in the E-Rate program.

### FCC FORM 498 COMPANY OFFICER

See "498 Company Officer."

### FCC FORM 498 DELEGATED USERS

See "delegated users."

### FCC FORM 498 GENERAL CONTACT

See "General Contact."

### FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC)

The independent U.S. government agency that regulates interstate and international communications and oversees the universal service fund, which includes the E-Rate program.

### GENERAL CONTACT

The employee of a service provider company who filled out the FCC Form 498.



**GENERAL FINANCIAL CONTACT**

A person who is authorized by the applicant to retrieve the FCC Form 498 information and obtain access to EPC. They are able to complete, but not certify, updates to the FCC Form 498.

**GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (GAO)**

An agency that studies and reports on the programs and expenditures of the federal government. It studies how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars, evaluates federal programs, audits expenditures and issues legal opinions.

**HEAD START**

A comprehensive child development program that serves preschool-age children and their families. Head Start facilities in some states are eligible for E-Rate program funding.

**INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER (ISP)**

A company that provides internet access service (also referred to as a service provider).

**OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB)**

Part of the Executive Office of the President, OMB reviews and approves FCC forms that are used by universal service contributors and universal service program participants, contributors and service providers.

**PREPARER**

The employee of a company that filed an FCC Form 499-A/Q.

**SCHOOL OR LIBRARY OFFICIAL**

A person who occupies a position of authority for the applicant (typically a superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, library director, assistant library director, county administrator, district administrator, or state education department or state library lead). Must be authorized to certify that the information provided in the FCC Form 498 is true, accurate, and complete. This role cannot be assigned to a consultant.

**SERVICE PROVIDER**

A company that participates in the E-Rate Program and provides telecommunications or internet services, equipment, hardware, or software.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER**

Defined by the FCC as a common carrier, this is an entity that provides telecommunications service, including inter exchange carriers, wireless carriers, and competitive local exchange carriers (also referred to as service providers).

**TERMS TO KNOW BEFORE APPLYING****BILLED ENTITY NUMBER (BEN)**

A unique number assigned by the E-RATE PRODUCTIVITY CENTER (EPC) to each entity (school, library, school district, library system, or consortium) related to an application or associated funding requests. Whether the entity is a "parent"/ "billing" entity or if an entity is a "child" entity associated to a "parent" BEN each receives a distinctive billed entity number in EPC.

**CONSULTANT REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN)**

A unique eight-digit identification number assigned by USAC to a consulting firm or individual consultant.

**FCC REGISTRATION NUMBER (FCCRN)**

A 10-digit number that the FCC assigns to a business or individual that registers with the FCC. It is associated with an entity's Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and is required before filing FCC Forms 499-A/Q. Originally called CoresID.

**FSCS CODES**

An identifying code for public libraries issued by the Federal State Cooperative System (FSCS), a cooperative program between the federal government and the states. FSCS data on public libraries is received from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

**FUNDING REQUEST NUMBER (FRN)  
A unique number that USAC assigns to each funding request in an FCC Form 471.****LETTER OF AGENCY (LOA)**

A Letter of Agency (LOA) establishes that applicant entities have authorized the person or entity identified in the letter to act on their behalf. An LOA is evidence that establishes the relationship between the authorized person executing any program forms, and the entities featured on those forms.

**NCES CODES**

An identification code for public schools issued by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education. Private schools may also request NCES codes.

**NON-INSTRUCTIONAL FACILITY (NIF)**

A school building without classrooms or a library building without public areas. Examples of school NIFs include administrative buildings, bus barns, and cafeteria facilities. Examples of library NIFs include administrative buildings, bookmobile garages, and interlibrary loan facilities.

**SERVICE PROVIDER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (SPIN)**

A unique number that USAC assigns to each service provider once that service provider has submitted the FCC Form 498 to USAC.

**SPIN – FCC FORM 498**

See “FCC Form 498” or “Service Provider Identification Number.”

**STUDY AREA CODE (SAC)**

A unique number that USAC assigns to eligible telecommunication carriers that uniquely identifies that company based on its service area. Companies must have at least one SAC per state in which they operate, but can have more than one SAC within a state if they have more than one service area.

**ELIGIBLE SERVICES****BASIC MAINTENANCE OF INTERNAL CONNECTIONS (BMIC)**

A Category Two service type on the Eligible Services List. Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections services cover the repair and upkeep of eligible equipment.

**BUNDLED SERVICES COST ALLOCATION**

E-Rate program recipients must cost allocate nonancillary ineligible components that are bundled with eligible equipment and services, such as Virtual Private Networks (VPN) bundled with internet access.

**CATEGORY ONE SERVICES**

Services used to connect broadband or internet to eligible locations, or services that provide the basic conduit access to the internet. Data Transmission Services and Internet Access are Category One services.

**CATEGORY TWO SERVICES**

Internal connections services needed to enable high-speed broadband connectivity and broadband internal connections components. Category Two includes local area networks/ wireless local area networks (LAN/ wireless LAN), internal connections components, basic maintenance of internal connections services, and managed internal broadband services.

**DATA TRANSMISSION SERVICES AND/OR INTERNET ACCESS**

A Category One service type on the Eligible Services List. Includes broadband connectivity and basic conduit access to the internet. This does not include charges for content, equipment purchases, or other services beyond basic conduit access to the internet. This service type also covers lit or dark fiber and self-provisioned broadband networks.

**DEMARCATION POINT OR DEMARC POINT**

A demarcation refers to the point where a service provider’s network ends and where an applicant’s local area network (LAN) begins.

**DISTRICT WIDE DISCOUNT RATES**

Starting with FY2015, all funding requests for any school or combination of schools within a school district qualify for a single school-district-wide discount rate.

**ELIGIBLE SERVICES**

Equipment and services that are eligible for E-Rate support.

**ELIGIBLE SERVICES LIST (ESL)**

An FCC-released annual list of the equipment and services eligible for reimbursement through the E-Rate program.

**INTERNAL CONNECTIONS**

A Category Two service type on the Eligible Services List. Internal Connections services are eligible equipment, such as routers, switches, wireless access points, and cabling, which are necessary to transport or distribute broadband within one or more instructional buildings of a single school campus or within one or more non-administrative buildings that comprise a single library branch.

**LOCAL AREA NETWORK (LAN)**

A data\* network that provides connections generally within an eligible school or library to other locations within the school or library.

**MANAGED INTERNAL BROADBAND SERVICES (MIBS)**

A category of service on the Eligible Services List. These services are provided by a third party for the operation, management, and monitoring of internal connections components. E-Rate support is limited to eligible expenses or portions of expenses that directly support and are necessary for the broadband connectivity within schools and libraries.

**MANAGED WI-FI**

See “Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS)”

**WIDE AREA NETWORK (WAN)**

A data\* network that provides connections from within an eligible school or library to other locations beyond the school or library.

\*The voice and video components of a WAN are not eligible for E-rate discounts.

**DISCOUNTS****ALTERNATIVE DISCOUNT MECHANISMS**

Schools that choose not to use the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) participation numbers to calculate their E-Rate program discounts may use certain federally-approved alternative mechanisms instead. These alternative discount mechanisms cannot be less stringent than the same measure of poverty established for the NSLP.

**CATEGORY TWO (C2) BUDGET**

A five-year budget or maximum on E-Rate pre-discount funds that an applicant may receive for category two equipment and services. For FY2021+ the budget is set for a 5-year rolling cycle based at the school district, independent school, library system, or independent library basis.

**COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP)**

An alternative provision to the normal requirements for annual determinations of eligibility for free and reduced-cost meals under the National School Lunch Program. Schools must have at least 25 percent of their students directly certified to qualify for the CEP.

**DISCOUNT CALCULATIONS**

Discounts in the program can be found in the discount matrix, by using the percentage of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program or an equivalent measure of poverty and the rural or urban status of the school district or library system.

**NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (NSLP)**

This federal program provides school lunches to eligible students at a free or reduced rate.

**NON-DISCOUNT PORTION**

The non-discount portion (also called non-discount share) is the applicant’s share of the cost of the eligible equipment and services, i.e., the cost to be paid by the applicant after the E-Rate program discount is applied.

**URBAN/ RURAL STATUS**

Every school or library in the United States is located in either a rural or an urban area, based on U.S. Census data. Entities in areas defined as rural by the FCC are entitled to additional E-Rate program funding in certain circumstances.

**PROGRAM FORMS AND CORRESPONDING LETTERS****BEAR NOTIFICATION LETTER**

A Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) (FCC Form 472) Notification Letter is sent to the applicant and service provider’s EPC Newsfeed after a BEAR form has been processed by USAC.

**FCC FORM 470**

The Description of Services Requested and Certification Form is an FCC form that schools and libraries complete to request services and establish eligibility.

**FCC FORM 471**

The Services Ordered and Certification Form is an FCC form that schools and libraries use annually to report services ordered and discounts requested for those services.

**FCC FORM 472 (BEAR)**

The Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement Form is an FCC form that schools and libraries submit to USAC after paying for services in full, to request reimbursement for the discount on those services.

**FCC FORM 473 (SPAC)**

The Service Provider Annual Certification Form is an FCC form that service providers file annually to certify that they will comply with program rules and guidelines. This must be filed before USAC will pay invoices.

**FCC FORM 474 (SPI)** The Service Provider Invoice Form is an FCC form that service providers submit to request reimbursement for discounted eligible services already provided to the schools or libraries on their customer bills.

**FCC FORM 479**

The Certification by Administrative Authority to Billed Entity of Compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act Form is an FCC form that consortium members (the administrative authority for CIPA purposes) submit annually to their consortium leader to certify that they are in compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act. After all FCC Forms 479 are collected, the consortium leader can accurately complete the FCC Form 486.

**FCC FORM 486**

The Receipt of Service Confirmation and Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Certification Form is an FCC form that schools and libraries file to inform USAC that services have begun, and of their CIPA compliance. It must be completed prior to filing a BEAR or SPI to request reimbursement.

**FCC FORM 486 NOTIFICATION LETTER**

This letter is issued by USAC to both the applicant and service provider to indicate that an FCC Form 486 has been successfully processed and invoicing may begin.

**FCC FORM 498**

The Service Provider and Billed Entity Identification Number and General Contact Information Form issued to collect contact, remittance, and payment information from service providers and applicants receiving universal service support. Service providers must fill out this form to participate in any of the universal service programs. As of July 1, 2016, applicants who choose the Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) payment method will need to file this form to receive an ID number (498 ID) for reimbursement payments.

**FCC FORM 499**

The Annual Telecommunications Reporting Worksheet. File this form if you are considered a telecommunications services and/or Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) carrier. If your principal communication types only include internet service provider, private service provider, nontraditional provider, and/or coaxial cable, you do not need a 499 Filer ID.

**FCC FORM 500**

The Funding Commitment Adjustment Request Form is filed by schools and libraries to submit changes to funding requests after USAC has issued commitments for those requests, including: adjusting the funding year service start date, adjusting the contract expiration date, cancelling an FRN, reducing an FRN, or requesting a service delivery extension.

**FUNDING COMMITMENT DECISION LETTER (FCDL)**

A letter that contains USAC’s funding decisions on an applicant’s funding requests.

**RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGMENT LETTER (RAL)**

USAC issues an FCC Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) to both the applicant and the service provider in EPC after an FCC Form 471 application is certified. The letter contains many of the details submitted on the form and provides a means to correct any mistakes.

**SPAC – FCC FORM 473**

See “FCC Form 473.”

**SPI – FCC FORM 474**

See “FCC Form 474.”

**SPIN – FCC FORM 498**

See “FCC Form 498” or “Service Provider Identification Number.”

**APPLICATION PREPARATION AND REVIEW****28-DAY WAITING PERIOD**

The minimum time period an applicant is required to wait after posting the FCC Form 470 before entering into any contract with a service provider and submitting the FCC Form 471.

**ALLOWABLE CONTRACT DATE (ACD)**

The Allowable Vendor Selection/Contract Date is the earliest date on which an applicant can sign a contract for contracted services or enter into an arrangement for tariffed or month-to-month services with a service provider and is calculated as at least twenty-eight (28) days or four weeks after the FCC Form 470 is certified.

**BID**

A response from a service provider (bidder) to a request for services on an FCC Form 470.

**COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS**

The process conducted by an applicant to select a service provider and order equipment and services. This process must be a fair and open competitive procurement.

**CONTRACT AWARD DATE (CAD)**

The date the contract is awarded to the service provider. The CAD must be a minimum of 28 days after the day you certify your FCC Form 470 and before certifying an FCC Form 471.

**CONTRACT EXPIRATION DATE (CED)**

The date the contract between the applicant and service provider ends.

**CORRECTIVE SPIN CHANGE**

A change to the SPIN featured on one or more FRNs that corrects a data entry error, reflects a merger or acquisition, or fixes some other type of error. It is not the result of a change to the actual service provider by the applicant.

**EVALUATION**

A mechanism for assessing and choosing a service provider from incoming bids. Note that the price of the eligible products and services must be included as a factor in the evaluation and that factor must be weighted more heavily than any other single factor.

**FCC FORM 471 APPLICATION FILING WINDOW**

The period generally between mid-January and mid-March (prior to the start of the funding year) when applicants request E-Rate support.

**LEGALLY BINDING AGREEMENT**

An agreement, enforceable by law, between two or more parties that creates an obligation to do, or not do, something. Also known as a contract. Contract definitions and requirements are contained in each state or territory's contract law.

**MINI-BID**

An evaluation process used by applicants when a state files an FCC Form 470 and signs state master contracts with more than one service provider. The applicant must evaluate all eligible state master contracts by determining the factors to use for its evaluation, with the price of eligible equipment and services as the most heavily-weighted factor, and demonstrate why the service provider it chooses is the most cost-effective solution.

**MINISTERIAL AND CLERICAL ERRORS**

Sometimes known as M&C errors, these are errors applicants make on FCC Forms 470 or 471 that do not materially affect the competitive bidding process and may be corrected after the forms are certified.

**PRICING TRANSPARENCY**

Provides greater visibility into pricing and technology choices by applicants. Information and pricing regarding the specific services and equipment purchased by schools and libraries are publicly available on USAC's website.

**PROGRAM INTEGRITY ASSURANCE (PIA)**

The compliance review process of FCC Forms 471 that must be completed before funding commitments are made by USAC.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

A form of solicitation for equipment and services that provides detailed information regarding those equipment and services and any additional details necessary for potential bidders to respond. Program applicants may issue RFPs in addition to filing the FCC Form 470.

**SELECTIVE REVIEW**

A separate component of the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review process that follows up on certifications that applicants make on their FCC Forms 471 about the competitive bidding process and the necessary resources to make effective use of requested services.

**SELECTIVE REVIEW INFORMATION REQUEST (SRIR)**

The request for information sent to applicants when they have been chosen for Selective Review.

**SERVICE END DATE**

The date that services will end for an FRN.

**SERVICE START DATE**

The date that services will start for an FRN. USAC may adjust this date if a program violation is identified or a deadline is missed.

**STATE MASTER CONTRACT (SMC)**

A contract that is competitively bid and implemented by a state government which can be used by eligible entities within the state to procure equipment and services, or both.

**STATE REPLACEMENT CONTRACT**

A state master contract, filed pursuant to a state-filed FCC Form 470, which can replace an existing state master contract that expires before the end of the upcoming funding year.

**WAVE**

This term is used for a group of funding commitment notifications that USAC issues to applicants and service providers on a given date. Waves are usually issued weekly.

**POST COMMITMENT AND PROGRAM VIOLATIONS****1ST DEMAND PAYMENT LETTER**

The initial letter sent by USAC to recover funds from applicants or service providers that have been disbursed funds in violation of program rules or requirements. This letter comes after a COMAD or RIDF letter has been sent describing the reason for the recovery.

**2ND DEMAND PAYMENT LETTER**

A follow-up request for payment issued 31 days after the 1st Demand Payment Letter to the impacted party or parties who failed to take action to return funds disbursed in violation of program rules or requirements.

**APPEAL**

A request to reconsider a USAC decision or waive an FCC Rule. If a participant disagrees with a USAC decision, they may request reconsideration. If the participant disagrees with USAC's decision, the participant may appeal to the FCC. Appeals must be submitted within 60 days of the appealable event or adverse decision.

**AUDIT**

A review of documentation and resources that verify compliance with program rules.

**BENEFICIARY AND CONTRIBUTOR AUDIT PROGRAM (BCAP)**

Run by USAC and carried out by auditors trained in universal service and program audit requirements, these audits of beneficiaries and contributors serve to identify noncompliance with program rules and amounts of recoverable funds.

**COMMITMENT ADJUSTMENT (COMAD)**

The process by which a funding commitment is reduced because of program rule violations.

**COMMITMENT ADJUSTMENT (COMAD) LETTER**

A letter issued to impacted parties that USAC has identified a rule violation and may seek recovery of any improperly disbursed funds. Letter contains a Funding Commitment Report which lists the Funding Request Numbers (FRNs) affected by the COMAD. If no action is taken, demand payment letters will follow providing an opportunity to return the funds.

**DETAILED AUDIT FINDING WORKSHEET (DAF)**

A worksheet that contains background information and notes the basis of an exception during an audit.

**DOCUMENT RETENTION**

Applicants and service providers must retain documentation related to the application for, receipt, and delivery of discounted services for at least 10 years from the last date of service delivery.

**INVOICE**

(1) A statement or document that (1) service providers submit to USAC after they have provided or completed service to the applicant or (2) applicants submit to USAC after they have paid for services in full. Invoices are submitted using an FCC Form 474 SPI (service providers) or an FCC Form 472 BEAR (applicants).

**INVOICE DEADLINE EXTENSION (IDE)**

A single, one-time 120-day extension of the deadline to submit an invoice – FCC Form 472 (BEAR Form) or FCC Form 474 (SPI Form). The extension must be requested on or before the invoice deadline.

**INVOICE STATUS REPORT (ISR)**

A report sent to service providers upon receipt of an FCC Form 474 SPI (Service Provider Invoice). The report identifies which invoice line items were accepted, modified and/or denied.

**OPERATIONAL SPIN CHANGE**

A change by the applicant to the Service Provider on one or more FRNs as a result of a change in the service provider providing the services.

**PAYMENT QUALITY ASSURANCE (PQA) PROGRAM**

A USAC program which assesses specific payments made to beneficiaries in all four programs to determine if these payments were made in accordance with FCC rules. Using results of these assessments, USAC calculates estimates of improper payment rates and provides this information to the FCC.

**QUARTERLY DISBURSEMENT REPORT**

A report issued by USAC to the applicant detailing all invoicing activity (BEARs and SPIs) for all funding years that occurred during the previous quarter.

**RECOVERY OF IMPROPERLY DISBURSED FUNDS (RIDF)**

A letter sent to impacted parties that disbursed funds must be recovered. This RIDF letter is issued when the original approved commitment is correct, but funds were disbursed in error. If no action is taken, demand payment letters will follow providing an opportunity to return the funds.

**REVISED FUNDING COMMITMENT DECISION LETTER (RFCDL)**

A letter issued by USAC to applicants and service providers when changes to a funding commitment occur, such as the result of an appeal.

**RED LIGHT RULE**

An FCC rule to implement the Debt Collection Improvement Act (DCIA) requiring that USAC withhold action on an application, payment, and/or other requests for benefits for a universal service program participant that is delinquent or owes a non-tax debt to the FCC or another federal governmental agency.

**RED LIGHT STATUS**

An entity is considered in Red Light status when no action to resolve outstanding debt has occurred and all demand payment letters have been issued. Red light status can also be a result of outstanding matters pending with other federal agency that impact participation in the E-Rate program. USAC will not fund or pay entities in red light status until the outstanding matter has been resolved.

**REMAND**

Action taken by the FCC to return applications to USAC for further review.

**SERVICE SUBSTITUTION**

A change in the equipment and services originally requested in an FRN.

**WHISTLE BLOWER ALERT/  
"CODE 9 CALL"**

This hotline allows members of the public to report suspected violations of program rules to USAC. These reports can be made anonymously online via the USAC Whistleblower Alert Form, email, by text to [WhistleblowerReports@usac.org](mailto:WhistleblowerReports@usac.org), toll-free by calling (888) 203-8100 or by U.S. mail to:

Universal Service Administrative Co.  
Attn: Fraud Risk Group  
700 12th Street, NW, Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20005