



E-rate Essentials & Elements

Debra Kriete, Esq.
South Dakota State E-rate Coordinator
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What is E-rate?

- National program that offers funding to K-12 schools and public libraries for certain technology purchases - \$4.276 billion
- **Category 1** funding is for broadband circuits and Internet access – services to buildings
- **Category 2** funding is for data network equipment and related services – service & equipment inside schools & libraries
- Funding is quantified as a discount off the eligible “pre-discount” price of the services and equipment
 - Discount matrix based on poverty and rural/urban
- Pre-discount price is set based on competitive bidding

3 Pillars of E-rate

- Building is eligible to receive E-rate funding
 - Schools, Libraries, Administrative buildings of schools and libraries (**Non-instructional facilities**)
- Service or equipment is eligible for E-rate funding
 - Annual **Eligible Services List** published by the Federal Communications Commission
 - **Competitive bidding** for most services and equipment to set pre-discount price (Form 470)
- Discount applied to pre-discount price to quantify E-rate funding (Form 471)
 - Discount matrix based on poverty level and rural/urban status per program definitions

Informative Resources

- Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) Web site
 - Administrator of E-rate program
 - www.usac.org/e-rate
 - <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/get-started/>
- Overview Documents
 - <https://www.usac.org/wp-content/uploads/e-rate/documents/Handouts/application-process-flow-chart.pdf>
 - High level flowchart
 - <https://www.usac.org/wp-content/uploads/e-rate/documents/Handouts/E-rate-Overview.pdf>
 - 8-page summary of program prepared by SLD

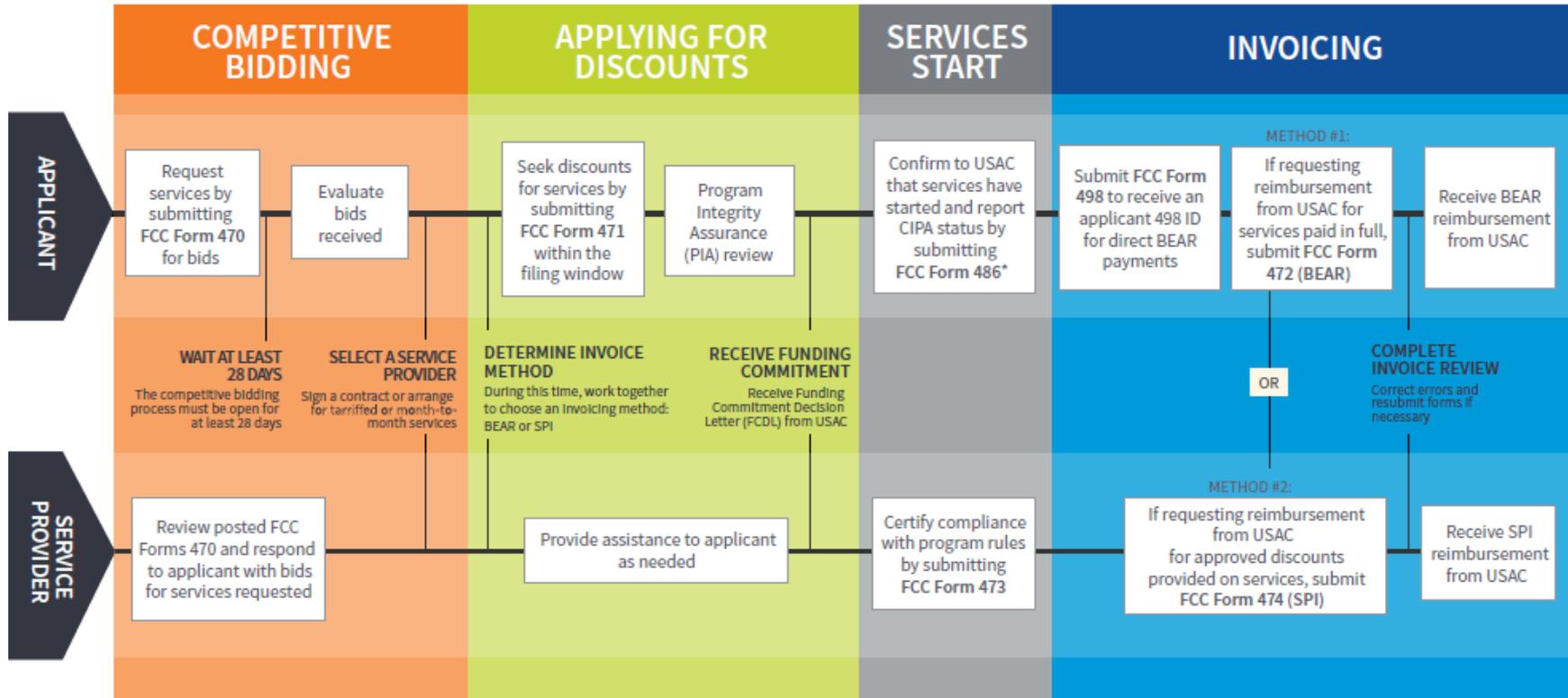


Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program APPLICATION PROCESS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

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

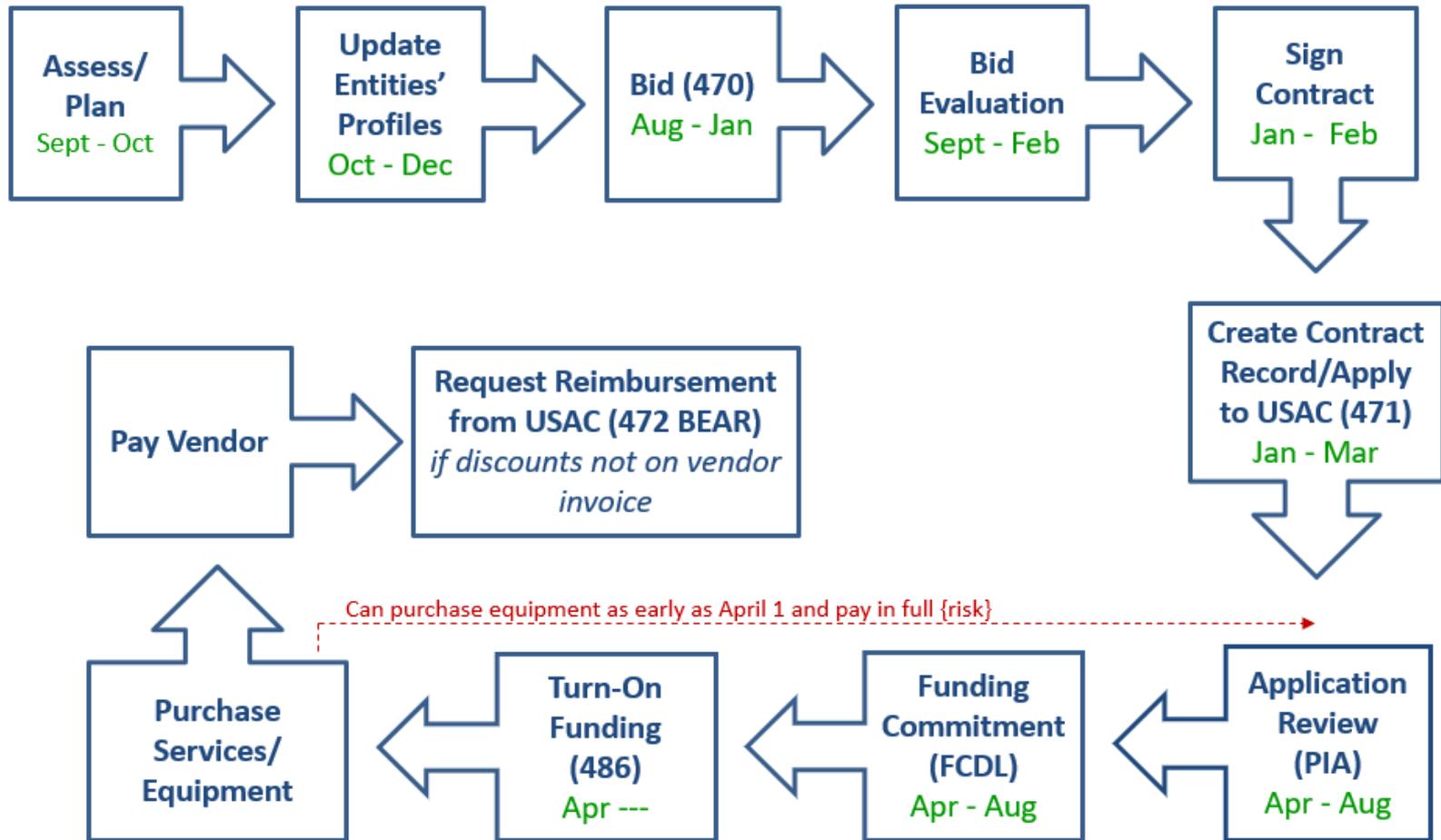
SERVICE PROVIDERS: Service providers must first obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN /service provider 498 ID) by submitting FCC Form 498.



FOR MORE 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.

Big Picture



<p><u>October 2021</u></p> <p>10/28 - FY 20 Recurring Services BEARs due 10/29 - FY 21 486 deadline for FCDLs prior to 7/2/21 FY 22 Admin Window to open Date TBD</p>	<p><u>November 2021</u></p> <p>FY 22 - Post Form 470 & Bid Evaluation FY 22 - Update entity info in EPC during admins</p>	<p><u>December 2021</u></p> <p>FY 22 - Post Form 470 & Bid Evaluation FY 22 - Update entity info in EPC during admins</p>	<p><u>January 2022</u></p> <p>1/28 - FY 20 Non-recurring Services BEARs due</p> <p>FY 22 - 471 filing window opens ;Date TBD</p>
<p><u>February 2022</u></p> <p>FY 22 - File Form 471</p>	<p><u>March 2022</u></p> <p>FY 22 - File Form 471 471 Deadline Date TBD</p>	<p><u>April 2022</u></p> <p>FY 22 - Submit RAL corrections if needed FY 22 - Answer pre-funding questions aka program integrity analysis (“PIA”)</p>	<p><u>May 2022</u></p> <p>FY 22 - File 486 to turn on funding upon receipt of Funding Commitment Decision Letter</p>
<p><u>June 2022</u></p> <p>FY 22 - File 486 upon FCDL receipt</p>	<p><u>July 2022</u></p> <p>FY 22 - File 486 upon FCDL receipt</p>	<p><u>August 2022</u></p> <p>FY 22 - File 486 upon FCDL receipt</p>	<p><u>September 2022</u></p> <p>FY 22 - File 486 upon FCDL receipt</p>
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Access to E-rate Productivity Center (EPC)

Online Filing Portal for Most E-rate Forms

EPC Overview

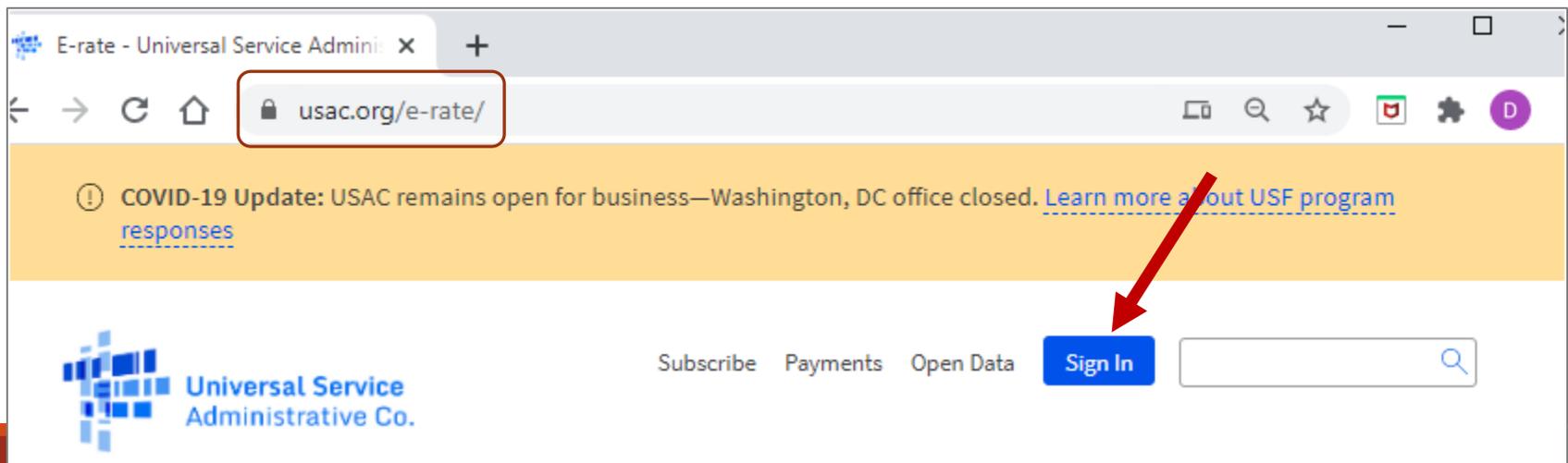
- E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) is the online filing system for most E-rate forms
- EPC log-in requires Multi-Factor Authentication
- Each person needs to be set up as a user
- To determine whether you are set up in EPC as a user, go to <https://forms.universalservice.org/portal/login>
 - Select **Continue**
 - 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

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

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



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](#).

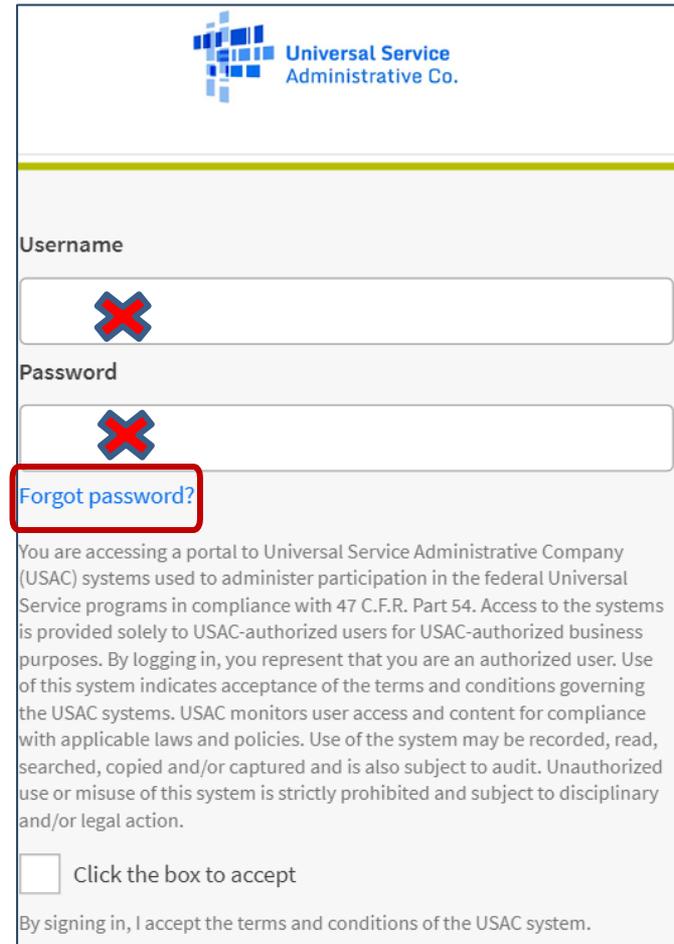
Continue

Initial MFA Set Up

Select **Forgot Password** –

Do **not** enter

Username/Password



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Username

Password

[Forgot password?](#)

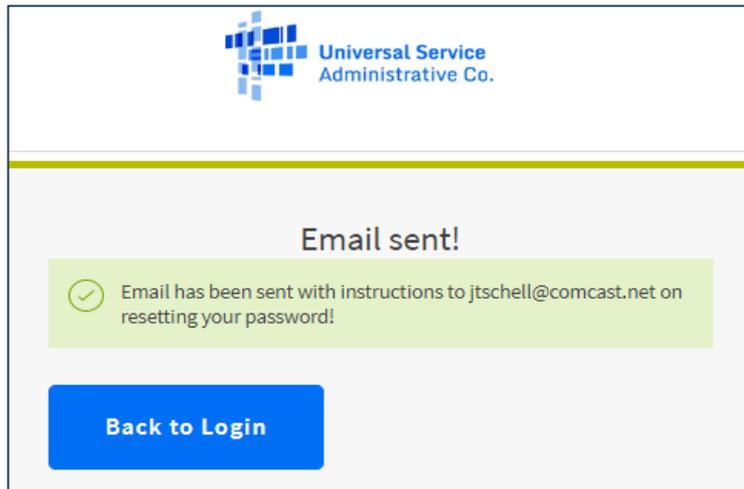
You are accessing a portal to Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) systems used to administer participation in the federal Universal Service programs in compliance with 47 C.F.R. Part 54. Access to the systems is provided solely to USAC-authorized users for USAC-authorized business purposes. 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.

Initial MFA Set Up

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

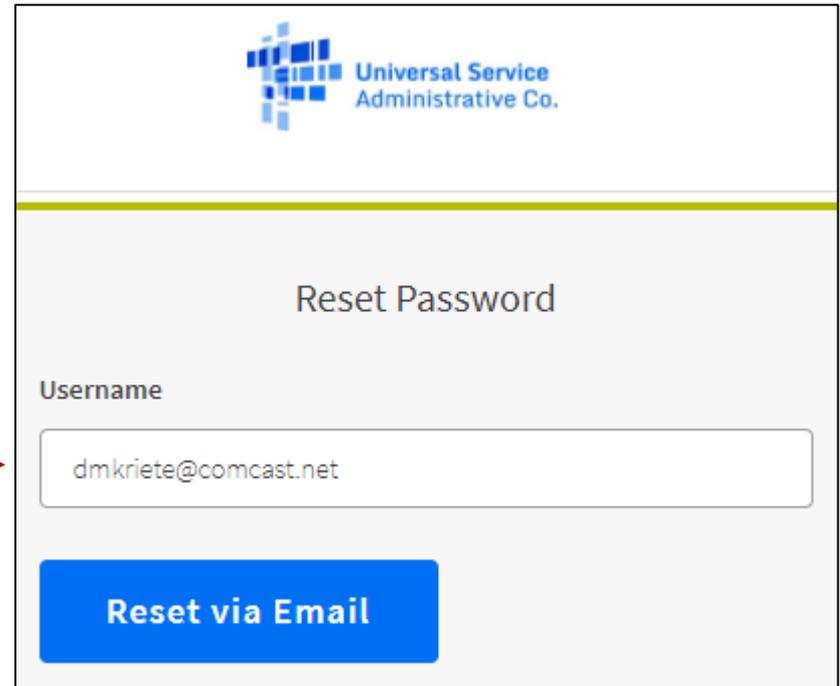


Universal Service Administrative Co.

Email sent!

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

[Back to Login](#)



Universal Service Administrative Co.

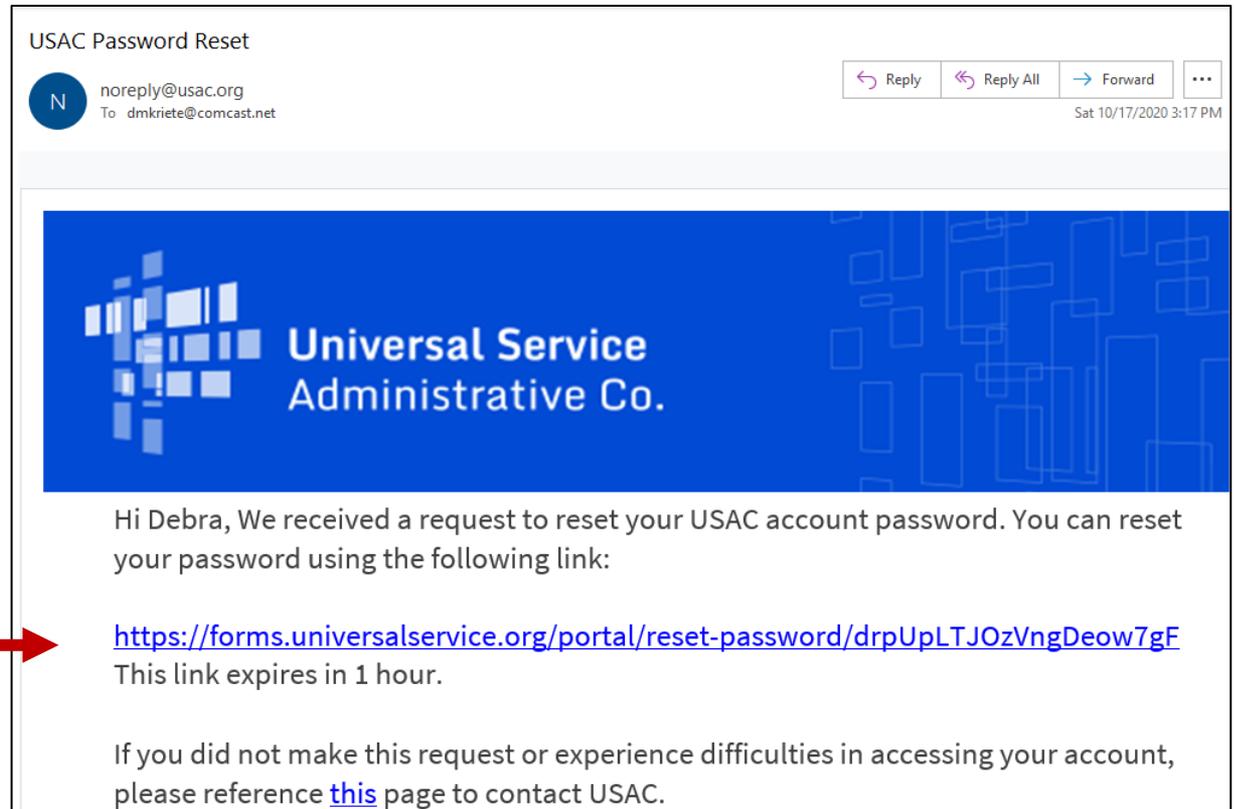
Reset Password

Username

[Reset via Email](#)

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

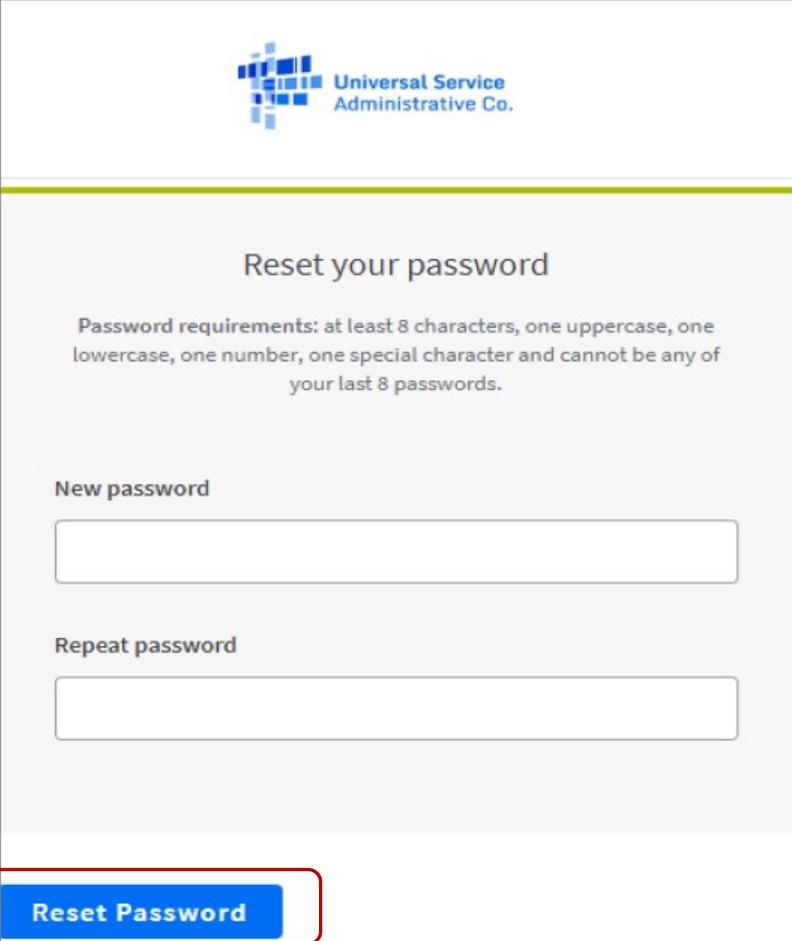


Initial MFA Set Up – Reset Password

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



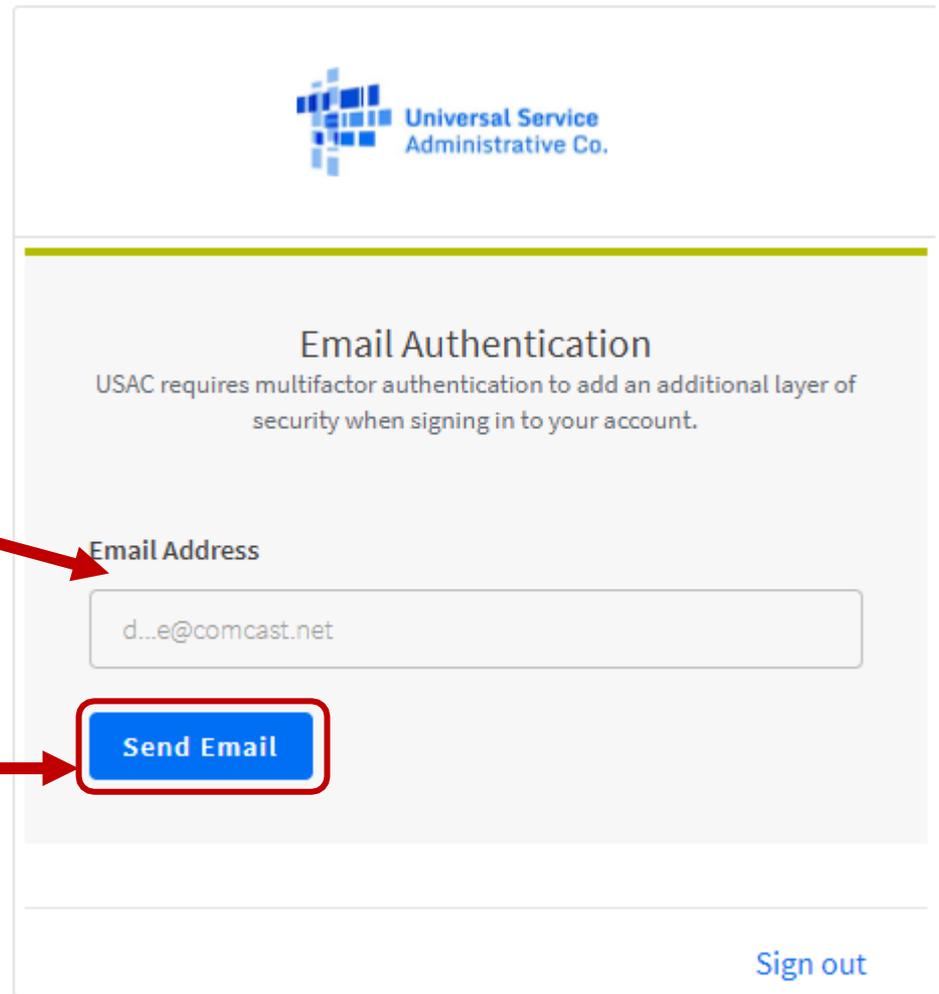
The screenshot shows a web form for resetting a password. At the top left is the logo for Universal Service Administrative Co. The main heading is "Reset your password". Below this, the password requirements are listed: "Password requirements: at least 8 characters, one uppercase, one lowercase, one number, one special character and cannot be any of your last 8 passwords." There are two input fields: "New password" and "Repeat password". At the bottom, there is a blue button labeled "Reset Password" which is highlighted with a red border in the original image.

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.



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Email Authentication

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

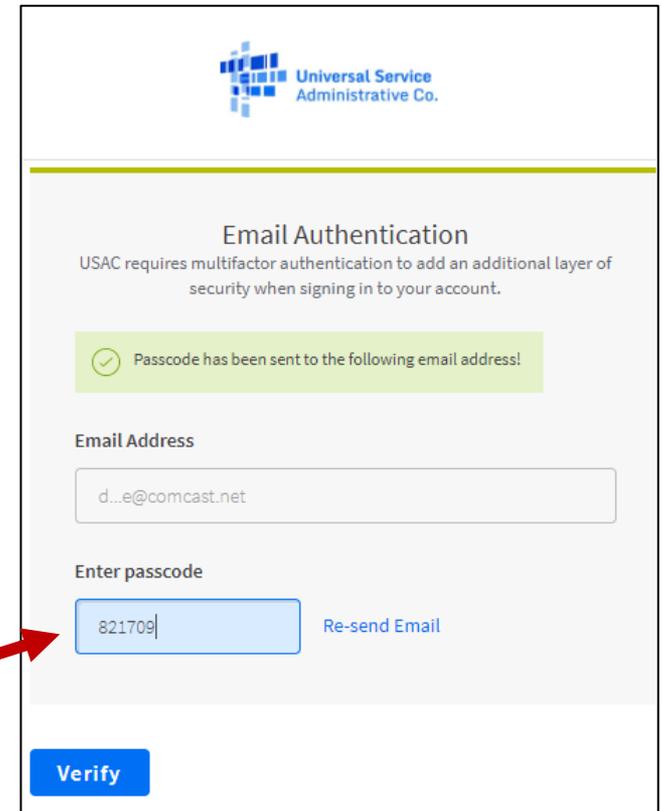
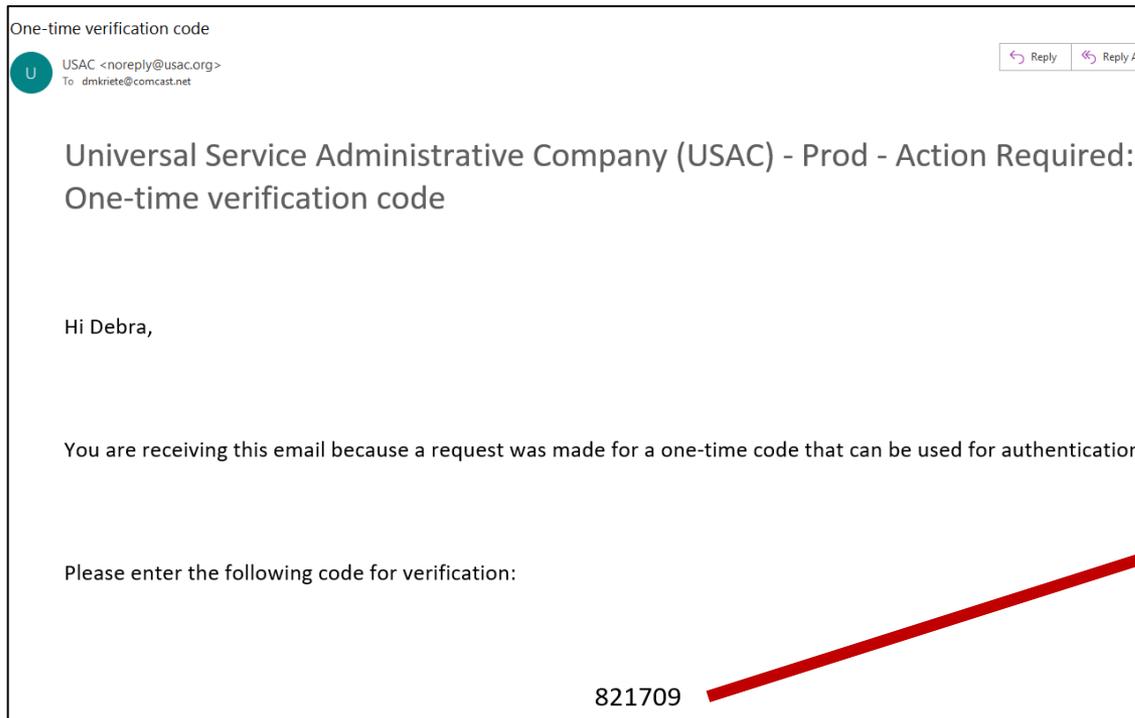
Email Address

Send Email

[Sign out](#)

Initial Set-Up: E-mail Authentication

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



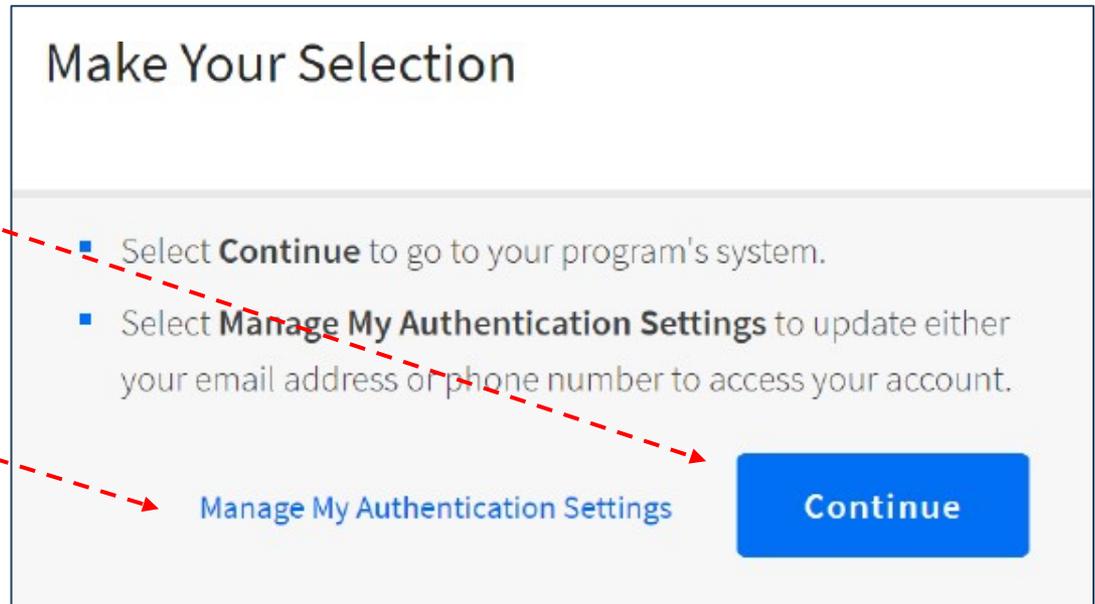
Next: Enter the verification code and select **Verify**.

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:



The screenshot shows a message box with the title "Make Your Selection". It contains two bullet points: "Select **Continue** to go to your program's system." and "Select **Manage My Authentication Settings** to update either your email address or phone number to access your account." At the bottom right of the message box are two buttons: "Manage My Authentication Settings" (a blue text link) and "Continue" (a solid blue button). Red dashed arrows point from the text in the slide to the corresponding buttons in the screenshot.

Dashboard View

 Upcoming Dates

Schools and Libraries 

Help?

Dashboard will show systems for which you have access:

- To enter **EPC**, click **here**
- To enter the **BEAR** system, click **here**
- To enter **ECF**, click **here**

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.

Send us a message
[Click here](#)

Call us
(888) 641-8722

Separate BEAR PIN no longer needed

Applicant Login:

BEN:

Email: dmkriete@gmail.com

Forms Filing in E-rate Portal

- EPC – File Forms 470, 471, 486, 500, service substitutions and SPIN changes
- BEAR – File Form 472 Billed Entity Reimbursement Form
 - If you do not see this option on your dashboard, fill out the PIN template file available at this link and then submit a customer service case in EPC and request that your user ID (email) be linked to your entity.
 - [BEAR Access Template](#)
 - To create the customer service case:
 - From the Actions tab in EPC, choose “Contact Us.”
 - The fields Nickname, Description, Topic, and Subtopic are required.
 - Create a nickname that will be easy for you to remember.
 - Provide a short description of the action you want us to take.
 - For Topic, choose “FCC Form 472 – BEAR.”
 - For Subtopic, choose “Other.”
 - Attach the template.
 - USAC will process the request and then email you.



E-rate Cycle Funding Year 2022

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Date TBD – Mid-Jan 2022 - Admin Window

- Manage entity information in EPC for each building that receives E-rate services
 - Schools update student enrollment and NSLP numbers
 - Verify and update name and address of each building
 - Libraries update square footage
 - Add or remove buildings that open or close
- Usually, schools use data from October of each year but may use more recent information if more advantageous
 - Due to USDA NSLP waivers, fall 2021 NSLP numbers may be skewed
 - Waiting to learn whether we can continue to rely on Fall 2019 data
 - Most recent accurate available information
- Student enrollment numbers are used to calculate how much Category 2 funding is available to each district or independent school

Assessment & Planning - Now

- To determine which services/equipment are eligible, consult the Eligible Services List. <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/before-you-begin/eligible-services-list/>
- *In a nutshell -*
- Category 1 – broadband internet access and transmission service – circuits to deliver internet to buildings.
 - All buildings – schools, libraries and admin buildings eligible
 - Service can be obtained on month to month, non-contract or via multiyear contracts
- Category 2 – equipment and services inside buildings to transmit internet to classrooms and libraries for patron usage
 - Network Equipment – routers, switches, access points & controllers, cabling, basic firewall, uninterruptible power supply, licenses & software to operate eligible equipment.
 - Basic Maintenance of eligible equipment - basic maintenance and technical support appropriate to maintain reliable operation when provided for eligible broadband internal connections
 - Managed Internal Broadband Services - Services provided by a third party for the operation, management, and monitoring of eligible broadband internal connections
 - Each applicant is assigned a budget for Category 2 purchases

Oct – Nov.

Category 2 Budgets - Schools

- Category 2 funding is capped for each school and library based on a budget formula
- School districts with 10 or fewer schools have 3 options to calculate budgets
 - District enrollment * \$167
 - Number of schools * \$25,000
 - Greater amount of individual school enrollment * \$167 or \$25,000
 - Add up each school's budget to arrive at district-wide budget
 - Independent schools may use the greater amount of school enrollment * \$167 or \$25,000
 - Budget amount is 5-year budget – prior to applying discount percentage

Oct – Nov.

Category 2 Budgets - Libraries

- Single library AND Library systems with 11 or more branches have 2 options – Greater of
 - Total square footage of building (including administrative, non-public space) * \$4.50
 - \$25,000 floor amount
- Library system with 10 or fewer branches
 - Either of the 2 options available to single libraries and systems with 11 or more branches
 - 3rd option – compute each building's budget individually and take the greater amount of the minimum floor or square footage * \$4.50 and then add up each individual library budget to arrive at the system-wide budget

SLD Category 2 Budget Tool

- <https://opendata.usac.org/E-rate/E-rate-C2-Budget-Tool-FY2021-/8z69-hkn7>
- Budget is calculated according to the most advantageous method
- Use filters on the right toolbar and then select **Apply** after each filter and you can export the results to a .CSV file which can be opened in Excel
- The tracker will be updated each year to reflect funding requested and approved by each school/district/library

Oct – Jan

Form 470 Competitive Bidding

- May begin as early as July (12 months before the start of the upcoming funding year) but more typically begins in the fall and finish in January
- Must be posted for any non-contract service (called “Month-to-Month”), new service & equipment plus any contract that expires before the end of the upcoming funding year (June 30, 2023 for FY 2022)
- Create Form 470 from your Landing Page in EPC

My Applicant Landing Page

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Welcome, THE BEST SCHOOL DISTRICT - (PARENT ENTITY)!

[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](#)

- Review whether a Form 470 has already been filed by looking up Form 470s for FY 2022 from your EPC Landing Page under “FCC Forms and Post-Commitment Requests”

▼ FCC Forms and Post-Commitment Requests

FCC Forms
 Post-Commitment Requests

Form Type: FCC Form 470

Funding Year: 2021

Oct – Jan

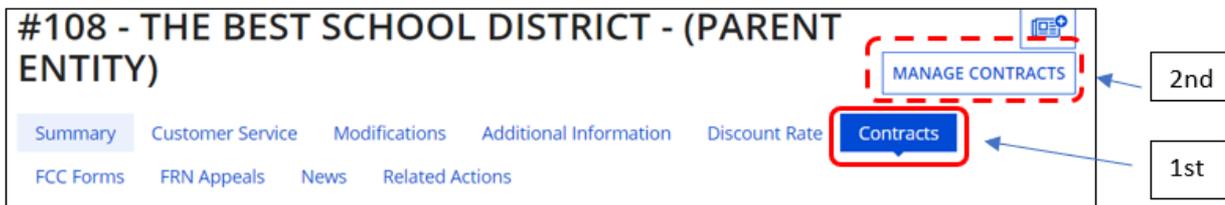
Bidding, Evaluation, Contracts

- Vendors will review Form 470s posted online and may contact you with questions
- Vendors are supposed to submit proposals within 28-day bidding period
- After 28-day bid period closes, school/district/library must conduct bid evaluation and select the “most cost-effective bidder”
 - Non-cost factors may be scored provided that the price of E-rate eligible services/equipment is weighted heavier than any other factor
- Once vendor is selected, negotiate and sign contracts
 - May need advance approval of board of directors before signing
 - Include contingency clause in case E-rate is not approved
 - Applicant must sign contract before submitting Form 471 application for funding

Jan – Mar

EPC Contract Record

- A record of each contract must be created in EPC before a Form 471 may be prepared that refers to the contract
- Month-to-Month service does not require contract record to be created
- Upload the contract in system and provide information about it
 - How many bids received, Form 470 # that was used to bid the service/equipment, date of contract award and date of expiration, extension options
- Access Contract records module in EPC by first clicking the hyperlink for your school, district or library name, then choose “Contracts” and then “Manage Contracts”



Jan – Mar

File Form 471 Funding Application

- Filing window opens around January 15 and closes mid to late March 2022 (to be announced by SLD usually in November or December)
- Identify all service/equipment for which funding is requested and itemize the service/equipment
 - Prices, quantities, make/model numbers
 - Identify the buildings that receive each service/equipment
- File separate Category 1 and Category 2 Form 471s
 - Separate funding request for each contract and vendor
 - Start 471 from Landing Page in EPC.



My Applicant Landing Page

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Feb – Sep

Pre-Funding Review of Form 471

- Beginning usually in February and continuing until all applications have been reviewed, Program Integrity Analysis staff will review each 471 for compliance with program rules and may ask follow up questions about your application such as:
 - Discount validation
 - Eligible service/equipment verification
 - Competitive bidding compliance
 - Cost-effectiveness review
- Questions are asked in EPC, and an email is sent to the 471 contact person to notify them questions are pending.
- Track pending inquiries from your EPC Landing Page:

Pending Inquiries

Type	-- Select a Type --	Application/Request	-- Enter an Application/Request --
Funding Year	-- Select a Funding Year --		

[APPLY FILTERS](#) [CLEAR FILTERS](#)

April - Funding Decisions

- Beginning sometime in April SLD will begin weekly “waves” of **Funding Commitment Decision Letters** (“FCDL”) in electronic format
- The Form 471 contact person and Account Administrator will be emailed a copy of the FCDL
- Provides decision and brief explanation of approvals changes/reductions/denials to your funding application
- Waves will continue weekly through September
- Find FCDLs from the Notifications area on your EPC Landing Page

Notifications

Notification Type	Funding Commitment Decision Letter	▼
Funding Year	2021	▼

60 Day Deadline for Appeals

- 60-day deadline to appeal adverse decisions, based on date of FC DL.
- 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 – Oct 28

File Form 486

- Notifies SLD that service will be received and used
- Notifies SLD that discount funding may be disbursed for the FRN
- Verifies the school or library is compliant with CIPA
- File Form 486 from the EPC Landing Page

My Applicant Landing Page



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[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](#)

Welcome, [THE BEST SCHOOL DISTRICT - \(PARENT ENTITY\)!](#)

Jul 2022 – Oct 28, 2023

Invoice SLD for Discounts

- Applicants may file BEARs to recoup E-rate discount funding if they paid the full charges to the service provider
- Service providers that discounted bills to Applicants may file for reimbursement of the E-rate discount funding
- BEARs must be filed by Applicants in the legacy filing system (not EPC)
- Deadline is Oct 28, 2023 for recurring services and Jan 28, 2024 for non-recurring services



E-rate Resources

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.sfmc-content.com/3n2usens2cz>
 - Review past issues here <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/resources/news-brief/>



What Needs to Be Done Right Now?

Things to Check On

- FY 2020 (Year ended June 30, 2021)
 - ? Did you pay full bill for any E-rate services?
 - If so, file BEAR form by 10/28/2021
- FY 2021 (Year ending June 30, 2022)
 - ? Do you have to file Form 486 to “turn on” funding?
- How to figure out what funding has been approved
 - Use Funding Request Status Tool - demonstration

Questions?

Thank you!

Debra Kriete

dmkriete@comcast.net

888 232 0241