



- Funding Status
 - E-Rate for FY 2024
- Setting or Updating User Permissions for Cybersecurity Pilot Program Forms
- Updates and Reminders
 - Upcoming Dates
 - ESL Comments for FY 2025
 - FCC Seeks USAC Board Nominations
- USAC E-Rate News Brief Dated August 28 – Form 470
- USAC Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter Dated August 29

Funding Status

E-Rate for FY 2024:

Wave 19 for FY 2024 was released on Friday, August 30th, for \$119 million including \$7.66 million for nine North Carolina applicants. Total funding is now \$2.17 billion including \$65.4 million for North Carolina. Currently, USAC has funded 92.7% of the originally submitted applications, representing 72.4% of the dollars requested.

Setting or Updating User Permissions for Cybersecurity Pilot Program Forms

As discussed in [USAC's Cybersecurity Pilot Program Newsletter dated August 22, 2024](#), forms and actions needed to participate in the Pilot will be created and certified, much like E-rate, through an online portal. Although the FCC has not announced the opening of the initial Pilot application period — expected shortly — USAC has opened the first portion of the “CBR” — standing for “cybersecurity” — portal to permit potential applicants to update their basic information and to set user permissions to create, review, and/or certify Pilot forms.

The newsletter indicates that the new CBR portal already includes basic entity data on all applicants that have been carried over from the E-rate portal. Prospective Pilot applicants are urged to review and update this information, particularly user permissions, in preparation for the opening of the Form 484 Part 1 application window.

There are three steps involved in adding or modifying user permissions for Pilot application work.

1. From your basic applicant CBR Landing Page, select “Manage Users.”

My Applicant Landing Page



Welcome, School District 10525!

[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](#) | [EPC E-Rate Invoicing](#) | [USAC Website](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#)

2. Select “Manage User Permissions.”
3. From the “Manage User Permissions” page, click the new button for “CBR User Permissions,” then select the appropriate “CBR 484 Permission” for each individual listed.

User Permissions

- EPC User Permissions
 CBR User Permissions

In the table below, you can designate the permissions that you wish to give to each of your users for the various tasks you can complete in the portal. This table will continue to grow as more functionality comes online.

- Full rights users can start, complete, submit and certify forms.
- Partial rights users can start and enter data in the form, but cannot submit and certify them.
- View Only users can only see forms created by other people in your organization but cannot create forms themselves.
- No Access users cannot perform any activity in the CBR module and may request access.

Name	Email	Apply All	CBR 484 Permission
FirstName LastName	sd_user_10525@mailinator.com		Full

It is important to note that E-rate consultant permissions were not automatically carried over into the Pilot section. Applicants planning to use consultants to help with the Pilot application process will need to proactively add those consultants — limited to three individuals per applicant — as users in their CBR portals.

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

- September 6 End of the PIA summer deferral period.
- September 9 Form 486 deadline for FY 2023 Wave 54. More generally, the Form 486 deadline is 120 days from the FCDL date, or the service start date (typically July 1st), whichever is later. Upcoming Form 486 deadlines are:
- | | |
|---------|------------|
| Wave 55 | 09/23/2024 |
| Wave 56 | 10/17/2024 |
| Wave 57 | 10/28/2024 |
- The first Form 486 deadline for FY 2024, for applicants funded on or before July 1st, will be October 29th.
- September 10 USAC webinar on the Pilot Program Form 484 Part 1 Overview and FAQs ([registration](#)).

- September 16 Due date for reply comments on the FCC’s proposed Eligible Services List (“ESL”) for FY 2025 ([DA 24-743](#)).
- September 19 With the exception of a couple of amendments subsequently published in the *Federal Register*, the FCC’s hotspot order ([FCC 24-76](#)) becomes effective on this date.
- September 19 As the result of the hotspot order becoming effective, the FY 2025 Form 470 also becomes available (see [E-rate News Brief of August 28th](#) discussed below).
- October 15 USAC webinar on the Cybersecurity Pilot Program Overview for Service Providers ([registration](#)).
- October 28 Due date for nominations for eight positions on the USAC Board of Directors (see [DA 24-867](#)).

ESL Comments for FY 2025:

Last Friday was the deadline for submitting initial comments to the FCC’s proposed Eligible Services List (“ESL”) for FY 2025 ([DA 24-743](#)). As of last weekend, only a few sets of comments had been posted. Additional comments may be available on the FCC’s [Electronic Comment Filing System](#) this week under Proceeding 13-184.

Most interesting is a filing by the [State E-Rate Coordinators’ Alliance](#) (“SECA”) that argues for the inclusion of advanced firewalls as being eligible for FY 2025. This is a proposal that has been made many times in earlier ESL proceedings, always to be rejected by the FCC. SECA argues that, with the FCC now formally acknowledging the importance of cybersecurity protection in its new Cybersecurity Pilot Program, FY 2025 is the year to carry-over funding for at least advanced firewalls to the broader E-rate program. SECA’s filing notes that:

- Firewalls are already eligible within E-rate, at least for “basic” (undefined) versions; making advanced firewalls eligible would simply redefine the restriction.
- E-rate funding for advanced firewalls is already covered within existing Category 2 budgets.
- Making advanced firewalls eligible, both within E-rate and the Cybersecurity Pilot, would benefit the majority of E-rate applicants, who will be excluded from the Pilot, and would permit the Pilot participants to devote more of the Pilot’s limited funds to other cybersecurity products and services.

In other comments referencing cybersecurity:

- [Los Angeles Unified School District](#) included a paragraph supporting the eligibility of advanced firewalls.
- [Funds For Learning](#) and [Infoblox](#) supported making Domain Name System (DNS) and Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) functions eligible as Category 2 services in FY 2025.

Reply comments on next year's ESL are due September 16th. We urge support of SECA's position on advanced firewalls.

FCC Seeks USAC Board Nominations:

As it does every year, on a three-year cycle, the FCC has requested nominations for members of the USAC Board of Directors ([DA 24-867](#)). The USAC Board has twenty members made up of USAC's CEO, Radha Sekar, eighteen others representing the interests of the programs administered by USAC, and one Tribal representative. The nineteen representatives serve three-year terms, normally with one-third of the slots open for nominations (or renominations) each year. This year, the FCC is requesting nominations to fill eight slots: six positions for expiring terms; one for an unfilled slot; and one for a recent resignation.

Most importantly for E-rate applicants, two of the positions for which the FCC has requested nominations this year are for two school representatives. This includes Julie Tritt Schell, the State E-Rate Coordinator for Pennsylvania, currently serving as the Board's Vice Chair. Hopefully, she will be renominated for another term. The other position has been held by Dr. Daniel Domenech who has resigned effective December 31, 2024.

The two other current Board representatives important to E-rate applicants are Dr. Joan H Wade, Executive Director of the Association for Educational Service Agencies, and Amber Gregory, Manager of E-rate Services for the Arkansas State Library.

Nominations for the eight USAC Board seats are due October 28th.

USAC E-Rate News Brief Dated August 28 – Form 470

[USAC's E-Rate News Brief dated August 28, 2024](#), announces the availability of the FY 2025 version of the Form 470 on September 19th. The Form 470 for the next funding year, normally available as of July 1st, had been delayed this year waiting for the FCC's new hotspot order ([FCC 24-76](#)) to be published in the *Federal Register*.

New to the FY 2025 Form 470 this year are:

- The ability to upload RFPs and other documents to the Form 470 after certification, even if the original Form 470 had no attachment(s). Note: significant changes to the Form 470 as the result of a new attachment will require an extended Allowable Contract Date.
- An ability to cancel a Form 470.
- Options to request hotspot devices and wireless internet services.
- Enhanced options to requests school bus Wi-Fi services and equipment.

Last week's News Brief also includes:

- References to new competitive bidding resources including a [How to File an FCC Form 470](#) learning module, [FAQs](#), and the following summary graphic.

THE COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS

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



The process consists of five steps:

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

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

USAC
Universal Service
Funds
Administration Co.

Available for Public Use

Publication Date: 8/28/2024

- Instructions for requesting Service Delivery Deadline Extensions for FY 2023 non-recurring services (other than special construction).
- Updates on USAC’s Open Data tools.
- 2024 training and outreach.

USAC Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter Dated August 29

[USAC’s ECF Program Newsletter dated August 29, 2024](#), includes a reminder that August 29th was the invoice deadline for Window 3 equipment and services. The ECF newsletter also discusses:

- The Congressional funding rescission cancelling a portion of the funding previously set aside for ECF funding. This portion of the newsletter includes a series of FAQs (previously provided) on the impact of the rescission.
- Reminders on:
 - Returning ECF funds.
 - ECF invoicing.
 - Payment verification.
 - Program compliance.

Newsletter information and disclaimer: This newsletter may contain unofficial information on prospective E-rate developments and/or may reflect E-Rate Central's own interpretations of E-rate practices and regulations. Such information is provided for planning and guidance purposes only. It is not meant, in any way, to supplant official announcements and instructions provided by USAC, the FCC, or NCDPI.

Additional North Carolina specific E-rate information is available through our Web site — <http://www.e-ratecentral.com/us/stateInformation.asp?state=NC>. Note that this site provides easy access to formatted North Carolina applicant E-rate histories via the Billed Entity Number ("BEN") search mechanism in the upper left-hand corner. Detailed information can be obtained by "drilling down" using the links for specific funding years and individual FRNs.

If you have received this newsletter from a colleague and you would like to receive your own copy of the North Carolina E-Rate Forum, send an email to join-ncerate@lists.dpi.state.nc.us. Please include your name, organization, telephone, and e-mail address.

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