



- Funding Status
 - E-Rate for FY 2024
- FCC Announces First Application Window for the Cybersecurity Pilot Program
- Updates and Reminders
 - Upcoming Dates
 - FCC Streamlined Decisions
- USAC Cybersecurity Pilot Program Newsletter Dated September 4 – Form 484 Part 1 Window

Funding Status

E-Rate for FY 2024:

Wave 20 for FY 2024 was released on Thursday, September 5th, for \$9.06 million including \$137 thousand for one North Carolina applicant. Total funding is now \$2.18 billion including \$65.6 million for North Carolina. Currently, USAC has funded 92.8% of the originally submitted applications, representing 72.7% of the dollars requested.

FCC Announces First Application Window for the Cybersecurity Pilot Program

The FCC issued a Public Notice ([DA 24-887](#)) announcing the opening of the Form 484 Part 1 application window for those schools and libraries interested in participating in the Cybersecurity Pilot Program ([FCC 24-63](#)). The Form 484 Part 1 window is scheduled to open September 17th and close November 1st, 2024.

As discussed in our [newsletter of August 26](#), the Form 484 Part 1 will serve as an initial screening mechanism for participation in the Pilot. We expect that only a subset of the applicants submitting this first form will be selected by the FCC to participate in the Pilot itself. Those selected will then be able to file the remaining forms: (a) the Form 470 to initiate competitive bidding for Pilot equipment and services; (b) the Form 484 Part 2 to provide more detailed information on Pilot plans; and (c), the Form 471 to apply for actual Pilot funding.

The FCC's announcement clarifies the next steps in the Pilot funding process for those Form 484 Part 1 applicants who are then selected to participate in the Pilot itself. The announcement states:

Selected participants in the Pilot Program will be required to provide more detailed cybersecurity information in Part 2 of the FCC Form 484, which may be submitted at the same time the Cybersecurity Pilot Program FCC Form 471 is filed in an upcoming FCC Form 471 application filing window.

A footnote to this statement further explains that:

Additional information will be made available in the future about how to complete Part 2 of the FCC Form 484 application, as well as the processes for conducting competitive bidding, seeking reimbursement for eligible cybersecurity services and equipment, complying with the Pilot’s periodic reporting requirements, and other processes.

We are now in the position to understand the basic sequence, and perhaps the rough timing, of the next steps in the Cybersecurity Pilot Program as they will apply to the selected participants. An optimistic schedule might be:

- The FCC will need to review all the Form 484 Part 1 applications to select those participants who will be approved to participate in the pilot itself. This could take at least two months. The FCC will then release a Public Notice announcing the chosen Pilot participants, possibly before the end of 2024.
- Selected Pilot participants will then — perhaps beginning in January 2025 — begin the competitive bidding process by filing the Pilot versions of a Form 470 to seek bids on eligible Pilot equipment and services. (Note: Eligible services are listed in Appendix B of [FCC 24-63](#).)
- We assume that the Form 470 window would have to be open for at least two months before the FCC would open the actual Pilot application window. Within the application window, Pilot participants would be filing both the Pilot version of the Form 471 and, as indicated above, the Form 484 Part 2. At best, we would expect the Pilot application window to close in the May-June time frame, roughly 2-3 months after the close of the FY 2025 E-rate window in March.
- Estimating when we might expect the first Pilot Funding Commitment Decision Letters (“FCDLs”) is difficult. If the previous steps and timing outline above occur, Pilot FCDLs could begin flowing in July. Note, however, that:
 - The Cybersecurity Pilot Program is not tied to any particular funding year (as is the E-rate program).
 - The review of Pilot applications will involve consideration of two forms per applicant, the Form 471 and the Form 484 Part 2.
 - Whereas the initial selection of Pilot participants may be tied to initial estimates of required funding, based on Form 484 Part 1 submissions, there is a possibility that total demand based on participant Form 471 filings will exceed the program’s \$200 million cap. Should this occur, the FCC may have to initiate a prioritization process that would require at least a preliminary review of all submitted applications before funding commitments could begin.

There remains a lot we do not know about the Cybersecurity Pilot Program. But we do now know that the adventure begins September 17th.

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

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| 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 1 st), whichever is later. Upcoming Form 486 deadlines are: |
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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: Pilot Program Form 484 Part 1 Overview and FAQs ([registration](#)).
- September 11 SHLB webinar: Preparing for the FCC's Cybersecurity Funding Opportunity ([registration](#)).
- September 16 Due date for reply comments on the FCC's proposed Eligible Services List ("ESL") for FY 2025 ([DA 24-743](#)).
- September 17 Opening date for filing Form 484 Part 1 to apply for participation in the FCC's Cybersecurity Pilot Program (see article above). The closing date for filing the Form 484 Part 1 will be November 1, 2024.
- September 17 USAC Webinar: Pilot Program Form 484 Part 1 System Walkthrough ([registration](#)).
- 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](#)).
- September 30 Last day to receive service or to submit a Service Delivery Deadline request for FY 2023 non-recurring services.
- October 15 USAC Webinar: Cybersecurity Pilot Program Overview for Service Providers ([registration](#)).
- October 28 Dues date for nominations for eight positions on the USAC Board of Directors (see [DA 24-867](#)).
- October 28 E-rate invoice deadline for FY 2023 recurring services.

FCC Streamlined Decisions:

The FCC issued another set of "streamlined," precedent-based appeals and waivers last week. As with past streamlined decisions, applicants facing similar problems as those addressed in these decisions may garner useful information by carefully reading the additional FCC explanations found in the footnotes. The original appeal and/or waiver requests can be found online in the FCC's [Search for Filings](#) under Docket 02-6 (E-rate) or Docket 21-93 (ECF).

In August's streamlined decisions ([DA 24-862](#)), the FCC:

1. E-Rate Dismissed:
 - a. Five Petitions for Reconsideration for failure to identify any material error, omission, or reason warranting reconsideration.
 - b. Two Petitions for Reconsideration as having been filed late.

2. E-Rate Granted:
 - a. Three Requests for Review remanding applications to USAC to reconsider discount rate calculations.
 - b. One Request for Waiver allowing the applicant additional time to respond to a USAC inquiry during invoicing.
 - c. Two Petitions for Reconsideration filed less than 30 days late or less due to unexpected illnesses.
 - d. Four Requests for Waiver for applications filed within 14 days of the close of the window.
 - e. Ten Requests for Waiver involving ministerial and/or clerical errors resulting in incorrect or missing FRNs.
 - f. One Request for Waiver extending the invoice deadline for an applicant that had been awaiting a post-commitment request.
 - g. One Request for Waiver of a special construction service delivery deadline.
3. E-Rate Denied:
 - a. Two Requests for Waiver involving late-filed Form 470s that precluded timely filing of Form 471s.
 - b. Fourteen Requests for Waiver for late-filed Form 471 applications where the applicants failed to present special circumstances justifying a waiver.
 - c. Three Requests for Waiver for late-filed invoice or invoice deadline extension requests.
 - d. One Request for Waiver for a service substitution not meeting FCC rules.

USAC Cybersecurity Pilot Program Newsletter Dated September 4 – Form 484 Part 1 Window

[USAC's Cybersecurity Pilot Program Newsletter dated September 4, 2024](#), referenced the FCC's Public Notice ([DA 24-887](#)) setting the Form 484 Part 1 application window. Please see the more detailed discussion above.

The newsletter also references cybersecurity resources of the Department of Homeland Security and the following upcoming USAC training webinars on the Cybersecurity Pilot Program:

- Form 484 Part 1 Overview and FAQs: September 10, 2024 at 3 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- Form 484 Part 1 System Walkthrough: September 17, 2024 at 3 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- Overview for Service Providers: October 15, 2024 at 3 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

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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