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Funding Status

E-Rate for FY 2025

Wave 19 of Funding Commitment Decision Letters for FY 2025 was released on Friday, August 29th, for \$112 million, including \$1.78 million for seventeen North Carolina applicants. Total funding is now \$1.95 billion, including \$45.5 million for North Carolina. Currently, USAC has funded 88.0% of submitted applications (just short of its 90% goal of “workable applications” by September 1st), representing 61.6% of the dollars requested.

Cybersecurity Pilot Program – Application Window:

The Form 471 application window for the Cybersecurity Pilot Program opened on March 18th and will close on September 15th, 2025. Total pilot funding is capped at \$200 million for 690 applicants, including \$7.9 million for fifteen North Carolina applicants.

In a notice to USAC last week ([DA 25-765](#)), the FCC announced the approval of the PIA review procedures for the CBR Form 471 applications. As has been the case with E-Rate, this was just simple announcement of the approval; no details of the procedures were released publicly. It is, however, a necessary step preceding the eventual issuance of Cyber Funding Commitment Decision Letters (“FCDLs”) — and an indication that PIA review of pending Cyber Pilot applications is about to begin.

E-Rate Central held a [Cyber Pilot webinar](#) (Passcode: qke^kt5R) last week suggesting additional guidance on bid evaluations, service periods, contracts, and CBR Form 471 service types.

Updates and Reminders

Upcoming Dates:

- September 5 Final day of the PIA summer deferral period (which began May 23rd).
- September 9 USAC in-person training in Denver, CO ([register](#)).

- September 15 Close of the Cybersecurity Pilot Form 471 application window and deadline for filing the Form 484 Part 2.
- September 15 Due date for comments to the Congressional USF Working Group (see our [newsletter of August 4th](#)).
- September 16 USAC in-person training in Washington, DC ([register](#)) (also available online).
- September 30 Last day to receive service, or to submit a Service Delivery Deadline (“SDD”) Extension request, for FY 2024 non-recurring services.
- October 20 FCC deadline for nominating six new (or renewed) USAC Board members (see [DA 25-738](#) and our [newsletter of August 25th](#)).
- October 29 First FY 2025 Form 486 deadline for applicants funded in Waves 1-10. The Wave 11 deadline will be October 31, with subsequent Form 486 Wave deadlines following weekly. Specifically, the Form 486 deadline is 120 days after the FCDL date, or the Service Start Date (typically July 1st), whichever is later.
- October 29-31 [AnchorNets](#): 13th Annual SHLB Conference, Crystal City, VA. E-Rate Central is a Gold-level sponsor of the event.

USAC E-Rate News Brief Dated August 26th

USAC’s [E-Rate News Brief dated August 26, 2025](#), covers the following topics:

- Resources to understand the Form 470 and competitive bidding process for FY 2026, including the following [Competitive Bidding Infographic](#).

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 (libraries 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 471
 - Consider all responsive bids
 - Use a [Bid 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.

Publication Date: 8/28/2024 Available for Public Use

- Requesting Service Delivery Deadline Extensions (normal deadline is September 30th) for FY 2024 non-recurring services (other than special construction networks).

- Updated [E-Rate’s Service Provider Process](#) section of the website, including adding three new resources:
 - [E-Rate Service Provider Activities for Funding Year \(FY\) 2025](#).
 - [Select an Invoicing Method in E-Rate](#).
 - [Registering for a Service Provider Identification Number \(“SPIN”\) Checklist for New Tribal Service Providers](#) (updated tip sheet for new Tribal service providers).
- USAC announced that it will be transitioning its business processing work (PIA application and invoicing review) over the next quarter from Maximus, its current vendor, to Ernst & Young, its new vendor. USAC states, with more confidence than we have, that the “transition to the new vendor should be seamless for E-Rate participants.” More specifically:

“USAC will reach out to E-Rate participants that have active applications, invoices, or post-commitment requests to share additional information about any changes related to the transition to the new vendor. We will continue to share information with affected participants by email, especially if the transition to the new vendor will affect those participants’ open E-Rate activities. We expect that by the beginning of January 2026, all open forms and requests (including invoices, appeals, and post-commitment requests) will be assigned to new reviewers.”

The good news from our perspective is that Ernst & Young is already handling USAC’s Customer Service Center (“CSC”) so it is not entirely new to E-Rate.

- USAC’s 2025 training and outreach includes two in-person training days:

Denver, CO	September 9, 2025
Washington, DC	September 16, 2025 (also available online)

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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