

# E-Rate Applicant Process

This page was developed by E-N Computers to provide an overview of the E-Rate application process. You can find full details on the official USAC website at <https://www.usac.org/e-rate>.

## Step 1: Competitive Bidding

- USAC makes FCC Form 470 available around January of the year prior to the funding year.
- Submit online **FCC Form 470**, and RFP if you have one or are applying for certain services, ideally between August and January. You want plenty of time for the bidding period, to select a service provider, and to submit FCC Form 471.
- Bidding must remain open at least 28 days after the last material change to your submission.

## Step 2: Selecting Service Providers

- Review bids from September to February, depending on when you close the bidding period.
- Create an evaluation matrix with cost-effectiveness as the most heavily weighted factor. Use it to evaluate bids.
- If you receive only one bid, it must still be cost-effective. If you receive no bids, you may solicit bids. If you have a service provider, you can ask them to submit a bid.

## Step 3: Applying for Discounts

- Filing window is mid-January to mid-March of funding year, with exact dates announced the December prior
- Submit **FCC Form 471**. Your selected service provider can assist you with the bill of materials.
- If you miss the deadline, you are unlikely to receive funding. You can request an FCC waiver, but it may not be granted.



## Step 4: Application Review

- When the Form 471 deadline passes, USAC begins reviewing applications and requesting additional information as needed. You have 15 days to respond to these requests.
- USAC issues Funding Commitment Decision Letters in weekly batches April through August.

## Step 5: Starting Services

- If your application is approved, discuss with your service provider(s) the details of the services and products you will be receiving, and decide who will invoice USAC for reimbursement.
- To “turn on” funding, submit **FCC Form 486** within 120 days of your FCDL or service start date, whichever is later. Funding is reduced if the deadline is missed.

## Step 6: Invoicing

- If you are invoicing USAC, pay the service provider in full, then submit **FCC Form 472** (reimbursement request) and **FCC Form 498** (contact, billing, remittance information).