

Acronym / Term and Descriptions

1st Demand Letter: The 1st Demand Letter is the initial letter sent by USAC to recover funds from applicants or service providers who have committed Program rule violations. If no action is taken within 30 days the violator will go on “Red Light” status.

2nd Demand Letter: The 2nd Demand Letter is a follow-up letter to a 1st Demand Letter sent by USAC in an attempt to recover funds from applicants or service providers who have committed Program rule violations. If no action is taken within 60 days, the case will be forwarded to the FCC for further action.

Allowable Vendor Selection/Contract Date: The Allowable Vendor Selection/Contract Date is commonly referred to as Allowable Contract Date or ACD. The ACD is assigned with the posting of a Form 470. It’s the earliest date on which an applicant can sign a contract for contracted services or enter into an arrangement for tariffed (T) or month-to-month (MTM) services with a service provider.

Alternative Discount Mechanisms: Alternative discount mechanisms are used by schools that choose not to use National School Lunch Program (NSLP) participation numbers to calculate E-Rate discounts for eligible products and services. These alternative discount mechanisms are based on – or do not exceed: the same measures of poverty established for the NSLP.

Appeal: An appeal is a request to reconsider a USAC decision. Appeals can be made to either USAC or to the FCC. Appeals must be filed within 60 days of the original USAC decision.

Audit: An audit is a review of documentation and resources to ensure that documentation is being retained and resources are being used according to Program rules.

BEAR: Form 472: See Form 472.

BEAR Notification Letter: The BEAR (Form 472) Notification Letter is sent to the service provider and the applicant after the BEAR has been reviewed by USAC.

BEN: The Billed Entity Number (BEN) is the unique number assigned by USAC to each billed entity – the entity that pays the service provider. See also Entity Number.

Block 4 Worksheet: Form 471 is divided into six blocks. In a Block 4 worksheet, the applicant lists the entities receiving service and establishes the appropriate discount level.

Block 5: Form 471 is divided into six blocks. In a Block 5 funding request, the applicant provides details about services requested, including service provider, category of service, and cost.

Certified Technology Plan Approver: A (USAC-) certified technology plan approver is an organization that has been certified by USAC to approve technology plans. In general technology plans approved by a USAC-certified approver are acceptable for the E-Rate Program.

CIPA: The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is the law that mandates Internet Safety policy and filtering requirements for applicants.

COMAD: Commitment Adjustment (COMAD) is the process by which a funding commitment is reduced when an error is discovered. Fund recovery is required if excess funds have already been disbursed.

Commitment Adjustment Letter: A Commitment Adjustment Letter (CAL) notifies both the applicant and the service provider of a COMAD. It contains a Funding Commitment Report which lists the FRNs affected by the COMAD.

Common Carrier: A common carrier is an organization either specifically recognized by a regulatory authority (such as a state public utility commission) to provide telecommunications services to all requesting parties, or that holds itself out to provide such services generally to the public for a fee.

Competitive Bidding Process: The competitive bidding process occurs during the 28-day waiting period that begins with the posting of Form 470 and/or RFP. Service providers respond to applicants based on the products/services listed in the Form 470 and applicants review and evaluate those bids.

Consortium: A consortium is formed by a group of entities for administrative efficiency or to obtain bulk pricing and/or apply for E-Rate funding. The consortium may include eligible and ineligible entities.

Consultant: A consultant is a company or individual selected by the applicant to serve as signing authority, to respond to USAC questions, and/or to complete and submit applications on their behalf. A Letter of Agency (LOA) or consultant agreement must be in place before the consultant undertakes these activities on behalf of the applicant. A consultant cannot be a service provider.

Contract Award Date: The Contract Award Date (CAD) is the date the contract between the applicant and service provider is fully executed.

Contract Expiration Date: The Contract Expiration Date (CED) is the date the contract between the applicant and service provider ends.

CSB: Our Client Service Bureau (CSB) is a helpline available to assist applicants and service providers. You can reach the helpline using "Submit a Question" from our website, toll free via fax at 1-888-276-8736 or toll free via phone at 1-888-203-8100.

Data Retrieval Tool: The Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) is used to access information related to applications, funding commitments, and disbursements.

Discount: The discount is based on a measure of poverty determined by NSLP calculations or approved equivalent alternative discount mechanisms and urban/rural status.

DRT: See Data Retrieval Tool definition above.

E-Cert or E-Certification: E-Cert is the electronic certification process which allows applicants to electronically sign their online forms using a PIN. Use of a PIN is the equivalent of a hand written signature.

Eligible Services: Eligible services are products and services approved to receive E-Rate support. Eligible services are divided into 4 categories: 1) Telecommunication Services (TS); 2) Internet Access (IA); 3) Internal Connections Other than Basic Maintenance (IC); and 4) Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC).

Eligible Services List: The Eligible Services List (ESL) is a list of the products and services approved by the FCC for funding under the Schools and Libraries Program. The ESL is funding year specific.

Entity Number: An Entity Number is the unique number assigned by USAC to an entity who participates in the E-Rate Program.

E-Rate: "E-Rate" is a common term used in place of "the Schools and Libraries Support Mechanism." The Program provides discounts to schools and libraries for eligible products and services.

ESA: An Educational Service Agency (ESA) is a regional public multi-service agency authorized by state statute to develop, manage, and provide services or programs to local educational agencies.

FCC: The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is an independent United States government agency directly responsible to Congress. The FCC oversees the E-Rate Program.

FCC RN: The FCC Registration Number (FCC RN) is an identifying number assigned to Program participants by the FCC. It is associated with an entity's Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN).

FCDL: Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) is the official USAC response to an applicant's Form 471 and advises what funding the applicant is eligible to receive.

Form 470 Description of Services Requested and Certification Form: The Description of Services Requested and Certification Form 470 is used by the applicant to open the competitive bidding process. It provides service providers with the opportunity to bid on the services.

Form 471 Services Ordered and Certification Form: The Services Ordered and Certification Form 471 is used by the applicant to report services ordered and request funding.

Form 472 Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form: The Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form 472 is used by the applicant to request reimbursement of the discount portion of eligible products and services after they have paid the full cost of the services.

Form 473 Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form: The Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form 473 must be filed annually by the service provider, to certify that they will follow Program rules and guidelines.

Form 474 Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Form: The Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Form 474 is submitted by the service provider to USAC to request reimbursement for discounts already provided on customer bills.

Form 486 Notification Letter: The Form 486 Notification Letter is issued to both the applicant and service provider by USAC to indicate that a Form 486 has been received and accepted.

Form 486 Receipt of Service Confirmation Form: The Receipt of Service Confirmation Form 486 is filed by the applicant to inform USAC that services have begun, the status of a technology plan, and the status of compliance with CIPA. Form 486 must be certified and accepted before USAC can pay invoices.

Form 498 Service Provider Information Form: The Service Provider Information Form (SPIF) Form 498 is completed by service providers who wish to participate in USF Programs. A SPIN (see below) is assigned based on this submission. The form provides contact information at the company/corporate level as well as contact information for each USF Program. The SPIF is also used to notify USAC of any changes to contact information.

Form 499-A Annual Telecommunications Reporting Worksheet: The Annual Telecommunications Reporting Worksheet Form 499-A is completed by Program contributors – interstate telecommunications providers – each year to report annual revenues.

Form 499-Q Quarterly Telecommunications Reporting Worksheet: The Quarterly Telecommunications Reporting Worksheet Form 499–Q is completed by Program contributors – interstate telecommunications providers – each quarter to report quarterly revenues.

Form 500 Adjustment to Funding Commitment and Modification of Receipt of Service Confirmation: The Adjustment to Funding Commitment and Modification to Receipt of Service Confirmation Form 500 is used by applicants to notify USAC of reductions to or cancellations of approved FRNs, and of changes to reported Service Start Dates or Contract Expiration Dates. It cannot be used to increase funding.

FRN: The Funding Request Number (FRN) is the unique number assigned by USAC to each Form 471 Block 5 Discount Funding Request. It is used to track and report details about products and discounts requested.

Funding Year: The Funding Year (FY) runs from July 1 to June 30. The funding year is the period of time for which an applicant is seeking funding from USAC. Funding Year 1998 (or Funding Year 1) was, by special circumstance, an 18-month year (January 1, 1998 – June 30, 1999).

HATS: Helping Applicants to Succeed (HATS) is an outreach and training program established by USAC to help applicants who have experienced difficulties with the E-Rate Program in recent years. HATS provides targeted training and outreach to help applicants become more successful when applying for discounts.

Item 21 Attachment: The Item 21 Attachment provides details on the products or services requested in an FRN and who will receive them. It can be filed online, by fax or on paper.

LOA: A Letter of Agency (LOA) authorizes (1) a person who is not a school or library employee to represent the applicant or (2) a consortium leader to apply for E-Rate discounts on behalf of the consortium members.

LSTA: LSTA is the Library Services and Technology Act (Pub. L. No. 104-208). Libraries must be eligible for assistance under LSTA and must meet other requirements to qualify for the E-Rate Program.

Ministerial and Clerical Errors: Errors made in completing E-Rate forms that can be corrected within established guidelines.

News Brief: The News Brief is a weekly newsletter from USAC that provides participants with up-to-date information, including important dates and tips regarding the application process and other breaking news.

NIF: A Non-Instructional Facility (NIF) is a building that may be eligible for discounts although it does not contain classrooms used for teaching students or public facilities for libraries.

No Child Left Behind Act: The No Child Left Behind Act provides the statutory definition of elementary and secondary schools. Schools must meet this definition as well as other requirements to qualify for the E-Rate Program.

Non-discount portion: The non-discount portion of an FRN is the cost of services not covered by the E-Rate discount. Applicants must pay their portion of the cost of services to the service provider.

NPRM: A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) is used by the FCC to detail proposed changes to FCC rules and to seek public comment on these proposals.

NSLP: The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides school lunches to eligible students at a free or reduced rate. An applicant's E-Rate discount percentage is based on NSLP and urban/rural status

OIG: The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is a division of the FCC that provides independent and objective audits and investigations relating to agency programs and operations, leadership, and coordination, and recommends policies to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in agency programs and operations. The Inspector General reports to, and is under the general supervision, of the FCC Chair.

OMB: The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is a component of the Executive Office of the President of The United States. They provide approval for FCC forms and other means of data collection.

PIA: Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) is the compliance review function for pre- and post-commitment requests.

PIN: A Personal Identification Number (PIN) is used to allow applicants to certify documents electronically.

PN: A Public Notice (PN) is issued by the FCC to notify the public of an action taken or an upcoming event.

Priority 1: In the E-Rate Program, Telecommunications and Internet Access services are known collectively as "Priority 1" since they are funded first.

Priority 2: In the E-Rate Program, Internal Connections Other than Basic Maintenance and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections are collectively known as "Priority 2" since they are funded after Telecommunications and Internet Access services starting with the neediest applicants first.

RAL: The Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgement Letter (RAL) is issued by USAC to both the applicant and service provider to indicate that a timely Form 471 and certification has been received. It provides applicants with the opportunity to review and correct ministerial and clerical errors.

Red Light Rule: The Red Light Rule requires the FCC to withhold action on applications and other requests for benefits when the entity applying for or seeking benefits is delinquent in non-tax debts owed to the FCC, and to dismiss such applications or other request if the delinquency is not resolved. It can affect any E-Rate participant – applicant, service provider or consultant.

Remand: A remand is an action by the FCC to return applications to USAC for further review and decision.

RFCDL: A Revised Funding Commitment Decision Letter (RFCDL) is issued by USAC to applicants and service providers when changes to a funding commitment occur, usually as the result of a successful appeal.

RFP: A Request For Proposal (RFP) is one form of solicitation for services or products. It provides details regarding needed services or products as well as the due date for responses. An RFP may be posted in addition to the required posting of a Form 470, and is not a Program requirement.

RIDF: A Recovery of Improperly Disbursed Funds (RIDF) occurs when USAC has identified that funds were disbursed in error but the decision to commit the funds was correct. USAC will seek recovery of the funds that were improperly disbursed but will not adjust the commitment amount.

RNL: The Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter (RNL) is issued to applicants by USAC to indicate that a Form 470 has been posted. It provides applicants with the opportunity to review and correct ministerial and clerical errors.

Selective Review: Selective Review is a review by PIA of certifications that applicants make on their Forms 471, such as those regarding the competitive bidding process, technology plans, and the necessary resources to make effective use of requested services.

Service End Date: The Service End Date is the date provided by the applicant that services will end for an FRN. The date may require adjustment if a Program violation is identified.

Service Start Date: The Service Start Date is the date provided by the applicant that services will begin or have begun for an FRN. The date may require adjustment if a Program violation is identified.

Service Substitution: A service substitution is a change in the products and/or services requested in an FRN. Service substitutions are allowable under certain conditions.

SLD: The Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) is a division of USAC which administers the Schools and Libraries Support Mechanism – commonly known as E-Rate.

SPAC – Form 473: See Form 473

SPI – Form 474: See Form 474

SPIF – Form 498: See Form 498

SPIN: A Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) is the unique number assigned to each service provider participating in the USF. See Form 498.

SRIR: A Selective Review Information Request (SRIR) is the request sent to applicants when their application has been chosen for Selective Review.

SSD: See Service Start Date

State Master Contract: A state master contract is a contract executed by a state which can be used by other departments and/or entities to procure products/services.

Technology Plan: A technology (tech) plan outlines an applicant's goals in the use of technology services. Tech plans must be approved by a USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver prior to the start of discounted services or submission of the Form 486, whichever is earlier. A plan is required for any service other than basic telephone services.

Technology Plan Approval Date: The technology plan approval date is the date that a USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver officially gave approval to the plan (This is different from the tech plan creation date).

Technology Plan Approval Letter: The technology plan approval letter is issued by a USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver to verify the approval status of an applicant's tech plan.

Technology Plan Creation Date: The tech plan creation date is the date that a tech plan was first written or prepared. (It is not the date that the final version of the plan was approved.)

Tennessee Test: The term "Tennessee Test" comes from an FCC decision, which specified the various conditions that an applicant must meet for on-premise equipment to be funded as Priority 1 services. An applicant may be required to provide the documentation during PIA review showing how requested services meet these conditions.

Tip Sheets: Tip sheets are one-page documents that provide a high level view of specific E-Rate topics.

Two-in-Five Rule: The Two-In-Five Rule states that, beginning with FY 2005, eligible entities will only be able to receive E-Rate support for Internal Connections Other than Basic Maintenance for two out of every five funding years.

USAC: The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) is the private, not-for-profit corporation responsible for administering the Universal Service Fund (USF). All of the country's communities are eligible to seek support from the USF.

USF: The Universal Service Fund (USF) was established in 1983 to help ensure that all Americans can afford telephone service wherever they live and to provide for discounts on services for schools and libraries and rural health care facilities.

Wave: A wave is the E-Rate term used for a group of funding commitment decision notifications that USAC sends out to applicants and service providers on a given date. Waves are usually issued weekly.

Whistleblower Hotline "Code 9 Call": The Whistleblower Hotline allows members of the public to report suspected violations of Program rules to USAC. These reports can be made anonymously toll-free to 1-888-203-8100.