How to Apply for E-Rate Funding as a Tribal Library

To Begin

Assess Your Library's Needs

- What equipment and services are necessary to bring broadband connectivity to the library?

  ‣ For example, what bandwidth speeds are necessary for providing Internet services to library patrons, or if there are numerous Tribal library branches, which library locations require broadband connections?

  ‣ **These are Category 1 services**.

- What equipment or services are needed inside the library for Wi-Fi?

  ‣ Necessary internal connections can include: the equipment (i.e., routers, switches, etc.) and cabling needs, the licenses needed for the equipment to function, and the basic maintenance of these internal connections.

  ‣ **These are Category 2 services**.

FC

To Begin

Obtain an FCC Registration Number

- Tribal libraries interested in applying for the E-Rate program must first create an FCC Registration Number through the FCC's Commission Registration System (CORES)

Obtain a Billed Entity Number (BEN) and Create a User Profile in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) Portal

- Tribal libraries must contact USAC's Customer Service Center to be assigned their unique entity number and to create their EPC account.

  ‣ Contact USAC's Customer Service Center by calling **(888) 203-8100** Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.to 8:00 p.m. ET.

For more information:
Read the Checklist for New Tribal Libraries.

Request Bids (FCC Form 470)

The FCC Form 470 is the first form that the Tribal library will need to complete in EPC to apply for E-Rate support.

The form seeks competitive bids on E-Rate-eligible equipment and services that will delivered in the next funding year.

- The Funding Year (FY) 2023 FCC Form 470 became available on July 1, 2022.

  ‣ Note: FY 2023 runs from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

This form triggers the competitive bidding process, which serves the goal of having as many service providers as possible submit bids so the Tribal library can receive better service and lower prices.

Selecting Service Providers

How does competitive bidding work?

- Service providers can review the posted FCC Forms 470 on USAC's website and directly respond to the Tribal library with bids for equipment and services based on the information contained in the FCC Form 470.

Tribal libraries must wait **at least 28 days** after the FCC Form 470 is posted before selecting and entering into an agreement with a service provider.

- Tribal libraries must select the most cost-effective option, using price as the primary factor in the evaluation process.

- If no bids are received, Tribal libraries can solicit a bid from a service provider and accept a single bid if it is cost-effective.

FC

Requesting E-Rate Support (FCC Form 471)

The FCC Form 471 is the second form that the Tribal library will need to complete to apply for E-Rate support.

After selecting their service providers, Tribal libraries must submit funding requests (FCC Form 471) for the eligible equipment and services to USAC during the application filing window.

- The FCC Form 471 application filing window typically opens in January and closes in March.

- The FCC Form 471 is available in EPC.

Application Review Process

USAC will review the Tribal library's requests.

- USAC may contact the Tribal library for information.

- New Tribal library applicants should be prepared to verify their eligibility for E-Rate funding.

  ‣ Tribal libraries must be able to demonstrate that they have three basic characteristics of a library:

    - Regularly scheduled hours;
    - Staff; and
    - Materials for library users.

  ‣ Tribal government entities can designate a library as a Tribal library (e.g., a Tribal Resolution). Tribal libraries may also work with the state library administrative agency where they are located.

USAC will then issue a funding commitment decision for each request.

- Reminder: discounts range from 20-90%. Tribal libraries must pay their non-discounted share of costs from their library budget, or other Tribal, state, or federal funds.

FC

Starting Services And Invoicing

Once services have begun, the Tribal library must complete the FCC Form 486 in EPC.

- This notifies USAC that:

    ‣ The Tribal library is receiving or has received service in the relevant funding year from the named service provider(s) and

    ‣ The Tribal library certifies to compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

Afterwards, the Tribal library may invoice USAC.

- Tribal libraries may request reimbursements from USAC for the discount share paid to service providers (by filing FCC Form 472 or Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form) or have the service provider seek reimbursement (by filing FCC Form 474 or Service Provider Invoice (SPI) form).

FC

OVERVIEW

FUNDING YEAR (FY) 2023
APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE