



E-RATE eNEWS

June 2026

E-Rate Survey - Help us Better Serve You

Your feedback helps us serve you better! You may have received a brief client survey today from Mary Jo, our Chief Operations Officer. The survey is designed to help us understand what's working well, identify areas for improvement, and ensure we are offering the most complete services to meet your organization's needs. We hope you will be able to take a few minutes to share your thoughts when the survey arrives.

E-RATE ONLINE will donate \$5 to the Special Olympics Young Athletes Program for each response we receive. Thank you for your partnership and for helping us continue to improve the services and support we provide!

News on the Future of E-Rate

You may have seen reports that the FCC has released a draft proposal seeking public input on several high-level aspects of the E-Rate program. The topics under review include eligible services, CIPA, children's online safety, competitive bidding, consultant oversight, and program administration.

Since these discussions have the potential to influence the future direction of E-Rate, this is something we are watching carefully. However, this is only a proposal for public comment—not a final decision—and there is no need to change your current E-Rate plans. We'll continue to monitor the process and share updates, analysis, and recommendations as additional details emerge.

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2025 BEAR Reimbursement Worksheets

If your school or library uses the “BEAR” method for E-Rate reimbursements, you will receive a spreadsheet in June from your Account Manager to collect paid bill information for your 2025-26 services. Please complete and return the spreadsheet with a sample one-month bill to us by July 30th so we can review and submit for your reimbursements.

If any updates were made to your services, such as bandwidth or service provider changes, number of lines, etc., we must file the appropriate forms with USAC **before June 30, 2026**.

As a reminder, these funds will be directly deposited into the bank account set up via the direct deposit information provided to us. If your banking information has changed, please let us know and we will take the appropriate actions to ensure you receive your funding. USAC has also added a UEI (unique entity identifier) field to the form, which means we’ll need you to provide that as well for any new forms or existing form changes. The UEI can be found in your school or district’s SAM.gov account.

If you were supposed to receive SPI discounted bills but did not, please let us know and we will contact your service providers.

Ready to Request your 2025 Cat 2 Reimbursement?

If you elected the BEAR reimbursement method for your approved FY 2025 Category Two project(s), please remember that reimbursement requests can only be submitted after your equipment and services have been purchased and all vendor invoices have been paid in full.

Once your project is complete, send copies of your paid invoices to your Account Manager, and we'll prepare and file the necessary reimbursement paperwork on your behalf. Most FY 2025 Category Two projects must be installed by **September 30, 2026**, so now is a good time to begin gathering your documentation if your project is nearing completion.

If you expect any changes to your project, particularly makes/models, quantities, etc., **please advise us before September 30** so that we can file the appropriate forms.

If you are concerned about completing a project before the 9/30/26 service delivery deadline, we can file a one-year extension as long as we do so before the deadline. Please contact your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager if you are interested in filing for an extension.

If you are not moving forward with funding requests originally made in your application, please let us know.

Find us on LinkedIn

Stay connected with us beyond email! We regularly share industry updates, program insights, compliance reminders, success stories, and practical tips to help you stay informed and get the most from our services.

Following us on LinkedIn is an easy way to keep up with important developments, see what our team is working on, and join the conversation on topics that matter to your organization. If you haven't already, follow our LinkedIn page and stay connected with the latest news and resources from our team!

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Get a Referral Bonus

We're growing — and we want your help! Do you know someone who could benefit from our services? When you refer a new client to E-RATE ONLINE, you'll receive a \$500 referral bonus off your Service Level Agreement as a thank-you once they sign on.

[Have someone in mind? Contact us! \(\[erate@erateportal.com\]\(mailto:erate@erateportal.com\)\)](#)

Program Integrity Reviews

Spring and summer are review seasons for E-Rate applicants. USAC's Program Integrity Reviews (PIA) ensure that the E-Rate program rules are followed, and that applications are filed correctly. While your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager can answer most reviews, there are times when we must reach out to you for additional information. If you receive a request from your Account Manager for information, please respond promptly! Missing a USAC review deadline can result in a funding reduction or denial.

Changes Coming to E-Rate Direct Deposits

Important Notice for BEAR Applicants Only: Beginning in August, USAC will require all direct deposit forms (Form 498) associated with the BEAR reimbursement method to include the applicant's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from their SAM.gov account. Forms 498 that are not updated by the August 2026 deadline may experience delays in reimbursement payments.

Not all applicants will be required to take action. However, if you receive an email from USAC with the subject line **"Action Required: Obtain Your UEI Through SAM.gov,"** please forward it to your

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Account Manager as soon as possible. We will review the notice and assist you with any necessary updates to help ensure your BEAR reimbursements continue without interruption.

2026 Funding Commitments

USAC began releasing funding commitments at the end of April, and we expect them to continue on a weekly basis. Once your funding is approved, your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager will notify you, send you a copy of your Funding Report and file the Form 486. Please review your funding report and contact us immediately with any questions or concerns.

2026 Reimbursement Method Requests

Please let your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager know your preferred method of reimbursement for the upcoming E-Rate funding year. 2026 marks the first time applicants were required to include their reimbursement preference on the applications, but USAC has indicated we can change the preference if necessary.

The choices are SPI (discounted bills) or BEAR (paying in full and receiving your reimbursement as a direct deposit). If you receive correspondence from your service provider regarding your choice of discount method, please forward the email to your E-Rate ONLINE Account Manager. We will complete the documentation on your behalf, track it, and send it back to the service provider.

Personnel & School Changes

If you have any personnel changes in your district (or expect to), please let us know. This especially applies to contacts who are listed as Account Administrators and users in the E-Rate EPC Portal. If you need your Account Manager to let you know who that person is, please contact us.

Also, if there are any school openings, relocations, closings, or mergers planned, please advise us as soon as possible.



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