

E-RATE eNEWS



August 2025

2026-30 Category 2 Budgets Set by the FCC

The FCC has released new E-rate guidelines for the upcoming five-year category 2 budget cycle, and it's good news for schools and libraries. Beginning July 1, 2026, the FCC will implement higher budget multipliers and a larger funding floor, giving applicants more room to improve their internal technology infrastructure. These changes are part of the standard E-rate refresh that occurs every five years. This new budget represents a 20.7% inflation rate adjustment:

School Budgets

- \$201.57 per student (up from \$167)
- Funding Floor: \$30,175 (up from \$25,000)

Library Budgets

- \$5.43 per square foot (up from \$4.50)
- Funding floor: \$30,175 (up from \$25,000)

As a reminder, applicants will be required to validate their student counts or library square footage in the first year they apply for Category Two support during the new budget cycle. Contact your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager if you have any questions.

Cybersecurity Pilot Program Update

The bidding window for the FCC's Advanced Cybersecurity Pilot Program has now closed. The next major deadline is in mid-September, by which time we must submit both:

- The funding application (Form 471), and
- Part 2 of the program application (Form 484, Part 2)

Please note, we cannot file the Form 471 until your 28-day bid window has ended. Once that period has closed, be sure to send all required documentation to your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager as soon as possible so they can file on your behalf. Form 484 Part 2 can be submitted at any time, so if you haven't completed and returned it yet, please do so as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out!

Program Integrity Reviews

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 many 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 denial.

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.

E-Rate Document Retention

E-Rate rules require that you keep all E-Rate-related documentation for at least ten years after the last date of service. Documentation can be stored electronically: you are not required to keep paper copies. This documentation includes all bids received (both winning and losing), bid evaluation worksheets, contracts, bills, and vendor correspondence.

2024 BEAR Reimbursements

Category One - The deadline to collect your 2024-25 E-Rate *Category One* reimbursements is in October. If you haven't submitted the information requested by your E-RATE ONLINE account manager, please do so immediately.

Category Two Projects - If you have completed your FY2024 E-Rate Category Two project(s) and paid your invoices in full, please send us a copy of the paid invoice, and we will have USAC process your reimbursement. **The deadline to make any changes to your committed equipment or request a delivery extension is September 30, 2025.**

If you are concerned about completing a project before the September 30, 2025 service delivery deadline, we can request a one-year extension if filed before the deadline. Please contact your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager if you need an extension.

Please let your Account Manager know if you applied for services or equipment for FY 2024 but do not intend to move forward with the purchase. Once we have written confirmation, we will complete the necessary forms to return your unused funds to your Category 2 budget.

If you were supposed to receive SPI discounted bills but did not, please let us know.

2025 SPI Discounts

If your district prefers SPI discounts (discounted vendor invoices), you should expect to see discounts within the next few months on your FY 2025 bills. If you don't, please contact your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager.

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.



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