

E-RATE eNEWS

May 2025

Senate Approves Repeal of E-Rate funding for Wi-Fi Hotspots

On Thursday, the Senate voted 50-38 along party lines to overturn the 2024 addition of Wi-Fi hotspots into the E-Rate program. The measures introduced by the House and Senate claim the FCC's decision to expand the E-rate program was an overreach under the federal law that defined the E-rate program as intentionally providing discounts for broadband services only to "school classrooms" and libraries. E-Rate's school bus Wi-Fi category is not affected at this time.

A total of \$27.5 million for Wi-Fi hotspots was requested by nearly 20,000 schools and districts in 2025. USAC has not approved any hotspot applications yet, nor have they provided specific guidelines as to how this decision affects 2025 applications. We will keep you informed as we learn more.

Program Integrity Reviews

Springtime is Review Season 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.

2025 Reimbursement Method Requests

Please advise your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager of your preferred method of reimbursement for the 2025 E-Rate funding year. 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.

If your banking information has changed, we must update the E-Rate Form 498 before you are able to receive your funding. Additionally, if the original Remittance Contact has left your district, please advise us as to who make the replacement contact. The reimbursement deposit report will be emailed to the remittance contact.

2024 BEAR Reimbursements

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 2024-25 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.

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.

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.

2025 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.

2024 Category Two Projects

If you chose the BEAR method of reimbursement for your approved FY 2024 category two project(s), completed your projects (purchased/installed), and vendor invoices have been paid in full, please send copies of the paid invoices to your Account Manager so we can file for your reimbursements. The installation deadline for most FY 2024 Category Two projects is September 30, 2025.

We are only able to file service substitutions through 6/30/25. If you expect any changes to your project, particularly makes/models, quantities, etc., please advise us before that date so that we can file the appropriate forms.

If you are concerned about completing a project before the 9/30/25 service delivery deadline, we can file a one-year extension if 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.

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!](#)

E-Rate Survey

One of our colleagues is conducting a nationwide survey of schools and libraries to gather feedback about the E-rate program and share with USAC and the FCC. It is an excellent opportunity to provide a candid assessment of the E-rate program's administration.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

How important is E-rate funding to your organization? Should the FCC include cybersecurity products and services in the E-rate program's eligible services list? This is your chance to provide input to the FCC without having to prepare a formal letter, and your responses are all confidential.

[You can find the survey here.](#)



200 Boston Post Road, Orange, CT 06477

866.671.9274 | erateportal.com

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