

Basic Terms

GLOSSARY

Anti-Deficiency Act:

Under ADA, new E-rate commitments are limited to un-obligated funds on hand, leading to funding freezes and delays. E-rate is operating under a temporary ADA exemption for 2005. Legislation is pending to make this exemption permanent.

Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement form (FCC Form 472):

The applicant form used to invoice USAC for E-rate discounts on a retroactive basis (when the service provider does not discount applicant bills directly).

Billed Entity Number:

An E-rate program identification number associated with applicants, organizations, or other entities that are billed for E-rate eligible services. BENs are a subset of Entity Numbers which are assigned to all E-rate participating organizations and facilities.

Children's Internet Protection Act:

A law requiring E-rate applicants to have an Internet Safety Policy and to filter Internet service. CIPA applies only to applicants applying for Internet Access and Internal Connections discounts.

Common Carrier:

Any telecommunications company that provides telecommunications services for a fee to the general public or to businesses.

Commitment Adjustment:

A procedure initiated when a SLD funding error is uncovered as a result of additional information and/or review. If funding has already been disbursed, the COMAD procedure will lead to a request for repayment from either the applicant or service provider.

COPAN:

Looks like, but is not actually an acronym. Refers to a FCC decision on an appeal by Copan (OK) Public Schools that established the rules governing SPIN changes.

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Client Service Bureau:

The SLD's helpline and data entry organization located in Lawrence, KS. More complex issues are handled by a smaller, related organization called the Technical Client Service Bureau ("TCSB"). The CSB can be reached by calling 888-203-8100.

Debt Collection Improvement Act:

As applied to the FCC, a law prohibiting any entity owing monies to the FCC from receiving additional benefits.

Federal Communications Commission:

The regulatory agency that oversees the E-rate, among many other responsibilities.

FCC Registration Number:

An identification number assigned to any entity, including E-rate participants, doing business with the FCC. The FCC also refers to these numbers as "FRNs".

Funding Commitment Decision Letter:

A commitment letter sent to an applicant listing the funding decisions made on every request in the applicant's Form 471 application. A separate version of the FCDL is also sent the service provider to report funding decisions affecting that provider.

E-rate:

A common name for the Universal Service Fund for Schools and Libraries.

Internal Connections:

The wires and equipment needed for connecting computers within an entity.

Month-to-Month Contract:

Services billed on a monthly basis without a formal, written contract.

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NIF Non-Instructional Facility:

A facility owned or controlled by an E-rate applicant that is not officially recognized as a school or library (e.g., administrative office, bus garage, etc.).

NSLP National School Lunch Program:

The free and reduced-priced lunch program that provides the primary indication of school poverty levels upon which an applicant's discount rate is determined.

PIA Program Integrity Assurance:

The SLD's application review organization operating out of Whippany, NJ.

POTS:

Plain Old Telephone Service for placing and receiving phone calls.

Pre-discount Cost:

Cost of service before E-rate discount is applied.

RAL Receipt Acknowledgement Letter:

A RAL is sent to the applicant to acknowledge the successful filing of a Form 471 application and to permit the applicant to make limited corrections to the application before review. A separate version of the RAL is also sent the associated service providers to report funding requests affecting those providers.

RNL Receipt Notification Letter:

RNLs are sent to the applicant when the SLD has accepted and successfully processed a Form 470. Other notification letters are sent in connection with processed appeals, BEARs, Form 486s, and Form 500s.

SLD:

Schools and Libraries Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company responsible for administering universal service.

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Shared Services:

Services delivered to more than one site; discount based on average or aggregate level. Site-Specific Services: Services delivered to only one entity, such as a single school.

Service Provider Annual Certification form (FCC Form 473):

An E-rate vendor is required to file a general certification form for each funding year. USAC will not pay any invoice (BEAR or SPI) for any funding year for which a SPAC has not been filed.

SPI Service Provider Invoice form (FCC Form 474):

The service provider form used to invoice USAC for E-rate discounts provided directly to applicants. The SPI is sometimes referred to as a "SPIF."

Service Provider Identification Number:

A unique, nine-digit, identification number assigned to service providers for E-rate purposes.

Tariff services:

Telephone service (e.g., local and long distance) regulated by state and federal officials.

Telecommunications Act:

The Telecommunications Act of 1996, among other things, established the federal universal service support mechanism for eligible schools and libraries.

TCSB: Technical Client Service Bureau. See "CSB," above.

Universal Service Fund:

Provides discounts to telecommunications carriers for delivering affordable telecommunications services to various categories of customers, including schools and libraries.

USAC:

The Universal Service Administrative Company is the parent company responsible for overseeing the administration of the Universal Service Fund. The SLD is one division of USAC.

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Waste, Fraud, and Abuse:

E-rate problems, highlighted in the press and in Congress, driving a number of new rules and review procedures.

Weighted Average:

The calculated amount of discount that reflects the number of students eligible, for instance, the National Free Lunch Program for a school district.

Window:

Time during which all Form 471s are treated as if filed on same day.