



Schools and Libraries

Schools and Library Applicants

Service Providers

About the Schools and Libraries Program:

- 🔗 Overview of the Program
- 🔗 Overview of the Process
- 🔗 Outreach and Training
- 🔗 HATS Outreach
- 🔗 Filing Appeals
- 🔗 Understanding Audits

Schools and Libraries Tools:

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- 🔗 Commitments
- 🔗 Submit a Question
- 🔗 Latest News
- 🔗 Calendar/Reminders
- 🔗 Required Forms
- 🔗 Reference Area
- 🔗 Search Tools
- 🔗 Changes and Corrections
- 🔗 Suspensions and Debarments
- 🔗 Whistleblower Alert
- 🔗 Submit a Complaint

Step 3: Open a Competitive Bidding Process (Form 470)

Applicants must file the *Description of Services Requested and Certification Form (Form 470)* to begin the competitive process and must ensure an [open and fair competitive bidding process](#) for specific products.

Applicants must file a new [Form 470](#) each funding year for requests for tariffed or month-to-month services and for new contractual services. When the Form 470 is filed, USAC will make it available to interested service providers by posting it to the USAC website.

Applicants **must**:

- [Describe specific services](#) or functions for support
- Identify the correct [category of services](#): telecommunications, Internet access, internal connections, or basic maintenance of internal connections
- Identify recipients of services for support
- Follow all applicable state and local procurement laws
- Wait 28 days after the Form 470 is posted to the USAC website or after public availability of your Request for Proposals (RFP), whichever is later, before selecting a vendor or executing a contract ([see Step 4: Select the Most Cost-Effective Service Provider](#))

Applicants **may**:

- Use RFPs or other solicitation methods tailored to specific needs and circumstances **in addition to** the required Form 470.

The Form 470 must be completed by the entity that will negotiate for eligible products and services with potential service providers. A service provider that participates in the competitive bidding process as a bidder cannot be involved in the preparation or certification of the entity's Form 470.

A new Form 470 is **not required** if an applicant intends to seek discounts on services provided under a multi-year contract executed under a posted Form 470 in a prior funding year.

Step 3: Open a Competitive Bidding Process

- ▶ [Describe Services Requested](#)
- ▶ [Run an Open and Fair Competition](#)
- ▶ [Form 470 Filing Information](#)
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Step 4 | Select a Service Provider Process

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Step 3: Describe Services Requested

Form 470 Information

Applicants must specify the services or functions for which they seek Schools and Libraries support.

The *Description of Services Requested and Certification Form* (Form 470) or Requests for Proposals (RFP) must define the specific services or functions (including quantity and/or capacity) for which funding will be sought. Applicants also must obtain specific cost information, including prices for products and services to be provided. Failure to adhere to these rules violates the requirement of choosing the most cost-effective provider.

RFPs or other solicitation methods must be tailored specifically to the applicant's needs and circumstances and must be based directly on the technology plan. Using a generic RFP or generic Form 470 previously used successfully by another applicant does not comply with the Federal Communications Commission's competitive bidding requirements. RFPs and competitive bidding processes that are structured to favor one service provider over another undermine the competitive process.

Discounts may not be sought for services in a category of service (e.g., telecommunications service, Internet access, internal connections other than basic maintenance, or basic maintenance of internal connections) on the *Services Ordered and Certification Form* (Form 471) if those services in those categories were not indicated on a Form 470.

Step 3: Open a Competitive Bidding Process

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- 2 Run an Open and Fair Competition
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Step 3: Run an Open and Fair Competitive Bidding Process

Form 470 Information

Applicants must ensure an open and fair competitive bidding process to receive Schools and Libraries support.

The competitive bidding process begins when the *Description of Services Requested and Certification Form* (Form 470) is posted to USAC's website. In Form 470, the applicant describes the types of products and services desired and for which bids are accepted. The applicant must conduct a fair and open competitive procurement in which a service provider is selected and products and/or services are ordered and reported on the *Services Ordered and Certification Form* (Form 471).

The applicant must be ready to accept bids once the Form 470 is posted on the USAC website. The applicant also must take an affirmative role in evaluating such bids. Applicants may not delegate the evaluation role to anyone associated with a service provider.

Request for Proposals. A Request for Proposals (RFP) is not required, but it is a good idea to have one. An RFP describes the project undertaken, with sufficient details to inform potential bidders of the scope, location, and any other requirements for the project. If an RFP exists, the applicant must indicate on Form 470 where the RFP is available, whether on a website or from a contact person. If state or local procurement regulations impose additional requirements, such as eligibility requirements for bidders, these requirements must also be noted on Form 470.

Competitive Bidding. The goal of competitive bidding is to have as many bidders as possible respond to a Form 470, RFP, or other solicitation method so that the applicant can receive better service and lower prices.

The competitive bidding process must be fair and open. "Fair" means that all bidders are treated the same and that no bidder has advance knowledge of the project information. "Open" means there are no secrets in the process – such as information shared with one bidder but not with others – and that all bidders know what is required of them. The Form 470, RFP, or other solicitation method should be clear about the products, services, and quantities the applicant is seeking and must be based directly on the applicant's technology plan. In addition, the applicant must avoid using generic or encyclopedic service descriptions on their Form 470, RFP, or other solicitation method. Using a generic RFP or Form 470 does not comply with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) competitive bidding requirements. Also, using an encyclopedic RFP or Form 470 does not comply with FCC competitive bidding requirements. Such generic or encyclopedic requests will inhibit service providers from composing a responsive bid without additional information or insight into the applicant's bid solicitation.

- Examples of a generic Form 470 or service description may include "all eligible services," "any E-Rate products," or "all telecom services".
- Examples of an "encyclopedic" service description are replications of the entire Eligible Services List or a "grocery" list of services that does not cover a specific service or product.

In order to be sure that a fair and open competition is achieved, any marketing discussions held with service providers must be neutral, so as not to taint the competitive bidding process. That is, the applicant should not have a relationship with a service provider prior to the competitive bidding that would unfairly influence the outcome of a competition or would furnish the service provider with "inside" information or allow it to unfairly compete in any way. For example, a conflict of interest exists when the applicant's consultant is associated with a service provider that is selected and is involved in determining the services sought by the applicant and the selection of the applicant's service provider(s).

Step 3: Open a Competitive Bidding Process

Describe Services Requested

Run an Open and Fair Competition

Form 470 Filing Information

Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter



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Step 3: Form 470 Filing Information

Form 470 Information

Posting of an applicant's *Description of Services Requested and Certification Form (Form 470)* opens the required competitive bidding process.

[Form 470 - Description of Service Requested and Certification Form](#)

Purpose of Form: Posting of the applicant's Form 470 on the USAC website opens a competitive bidding process for the services listed either on the form or in the Request for Proposals (RFP) indicated on the form.

When to File Form 470: Form 470 can be filed for a particular funding year as soon as USAC posts a notice to that effect on its website. This notice will be posted at least 12 months before the start of a funding year.

Form 470 must be POSTED on USAC's web site for at least 28 days before an applicant can execute a contract for contracted services, select a service provider for tariffed or month-to-month services, and sign and submit the *Services Ordered and Certification Form (Form 471)*. If an RFP is issued, the RFP must remain open for at least 28 days.

USAC Letter: USAC will issue a [Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter](#) to the applicant upon successful data entry of the Form 470. (NOTE: The Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter may be issued before the Block 5 certifications have been successfully data entered.)

Step 3: Open a Competitive Bidding Process

- Describe Services Requested
- Run an Open and Fair Competition
- Form 470 Filing Information
- Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter

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Step 3: Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter

Sample Letter

Applicants receive a Receipt Notification Letter upon successful posting of a Description of Services Requested and Certification Form (Form 470) on the USAC website. The RNL includes important deadlines and reminders.

Applicants should carefully review the Form 470 RNL and determine whether they need to make corrections to their Form 470.

When an applicant detects data entry or [ministerial and clerical errors](#) have occurred they may make allowable corrections to their Form 470 without posting a new Form 470. The applicant must make the correction on the RNL Allowable Correction Section and submit the correction to USAC within 15 days of the postmark date of the RNL.

If a non-allowable correction on the Form 470 is identified, the applicant must post and certify a new Form 470 within the filing window. When posting a new Form 470, keep in mind the Form 470 must be posted at least 28 days prior to signing a contract or selecting a service provider.

Options for RNL Corrections

If you would like to correct ministerial or clerical errors on your Form 470, you can mark up your copy of the [Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter \(RNL\)](#) and mail it back to USAC. The RNL includes detailed instructions and the mailing address for submitting any corrections.

We now have both email and fax options if you prefer to use them to submit corrections.

- To **email** corrections, scan the appropriate pages of the RNL and email the resulting document to:

470RNLcorrections@sl.universalservice.org

Remember to sign and date the pages of the RNL. Also, in the text of the email, include your Form 470 Application Number, your Billed Entity Name and Billed Entity Number, and your name and contact information (email, fax, and/or phone).

- To **fax** corrections, use the following fax number:

(973) 599-6526

Remember to sign and date the pages of the RNL. Also, on the fax cover sheet, include your Form 470 Application Number, your Billed Entity Name and Billed Entity Number, and your name and contact information (email, fax, and/or phone).

View a sample [Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter](#) 

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