

# E-rate Training Workshop for Veteran PA Applicants

*Let's prepare for FY 2021*



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October 2020

# Topics to Cover

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- COVID-related update
- What's Changing for FY 2021
  - New Category 2 budgets
  - New equipment transfer rules
  - FY 2021 Admin Window changes
    - New school “subtypes”
    - What NSLP data to use this year
  - FY 2021 Form 471 changes
  - One Portal
    - Getting set up
    - Adding text message validation option
- Status of FY 2020
  - Denial reasons
  - FY 486s due
- FY 2019 BEARs Due
  - How to request BEAR PIN
- Reminders for FY 2021



# COVID-Related Update

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- **COVID C1 Window**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> FY 2020 Category 1 window closed Friday, October 16
  - More than 2200 applications were filed, including 130 PA applications
  - USAC working to have those FCDLs out within next 1-2 months
    - Some FCDLs have been issued
    - Coming in normal weekly waves
    - Don't forget to file 486 for any new FRNs
  - Attempting to merge original FRNs with new FRN, if possible
  - If you missed this deadline, file ASAP, then request a deadline waiver from the FCC
- **FY 2019 Revised Deadlines**
  - BEAR deadline for recurring services extended to 2/25/2021
  - Deadline to receive/install C2 equipment extended to 9/30/2021
    - Thus, FY 2019 C2 BEAR deadline extended to 1/28/2022 (120 days after last date to receive equipment)
- **Gift Rules Remain Suspended**
  - Through December 31, 2020
  - May extend further, depending on feedback received

# ***What's Changing for FY 2021***



# Category 2, 5-Year Funding Caps

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- New, fresh C2 budget cycle – Funding Years 2021 – 2025
  - All C2 budgets will reset in FY 2026 and no funding will be carried over
- Budget multipliers will not increase with inflation during 5-year cycle
- C2 budgets are **pre-discount**
  - Applicants' E-rate discounts then apply

## **New C2 budget multipliers:**

### **Single Schools:**

\$167 x total enrollment OR \$25,000, whichever total budget is greater

### **School Districts:**

\$167 x total district enrollment, OR

\$25,000 x total number of schools in the district

– Whichever total budget is greater

### **Independent Libraries:**

\$4.50 x total square footage OR \$25,000, whichever total budget is greater

### **Library Systems:**

\$4.50 x total square feet of all library branches OR \$25,000, whichever total budget is greater

- Hybrid budget option for small school districts/library systems

# Hybrid C2 Budget Calculation for Smaller School Districts/Library Systems

School Districts/Library Systems with **10 or fewer** schools – 3 options:

a) Calculate by total district enrollment x \$167

or

b) Calculate by total number of schools x \$25,000

or

c) **Hybrid**: Calculate by school and take the higher amount (\$25,000, or school enrollment square feet \* \$167) from each school and add together



School	Enrollment	FY 2021 - 2025 Budget (hybrid)
Red School	625	x \$167 = \$104,375
Green School	300	x \$167 = \$50,100
Yellow School	50	Minimum = \$25,000
Blue School	120	Minimum = \$25,000
Total of all buildings' max. budgets:		<b>\$204,475</b>

a)  $\$167 \times 1095 = \$182,865$

b)  $\$25,000 \times 4 = \$200,000$

c) Hybrid = \$204,475

By default, the system will calculate the discount using them most advantageous method to give you the highest C2 budget allowed

# Category 2 Funding Budget Example

5-Year C2 Budget Cap*	E-rate Discount	E-rate Will Pay:	District's Share %	District Must Pay:
\$204,475	60%	\$122,685	40%	\$81,790

\* The C2 Budget Cap is the **pre-discount price**. E-rate discounts will then apply **on top of** the budget cap. In this example, district would still owe their 40% non-discounted share

- Future funding years: To determine what “**remains**” in a C2 budget for future years in the C2 “cycle”, take the 5-Year Budget Cap and subtract the pre-discount amounts of what has been “committed” in the previous year(s) of the C2 cycle.

## What is YOUR 5-Year Category 2 Budget Cap?

- List available at: <http://e-ratepa.org/?p=32602>

# Changes to Enrollment Validations

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- Beginning in FY 2021, enrollment is used for both discount calculations and C2 budget calculations
- For C2, enrollments are **only required to be updated and PIA-validated the first time** a Form 471 is submitted during new budget cycle
  - If enrollment increases, **enrollments figures can be updated**
  - If enrollment decreases, **not require to downward adjust enrollment**
- Category 2 enrollment data can be different from annual discount-rate enrollment data
  - C2 enrollment data entered separately in EPC (see next)
- Career & Technology Centers: Enter all students as full-time students
- New school construction:
  - Students will be accounted for in district-wide budget
  - Districts will not estimate enrollment of schools under construction
  - Charter and private schools are allowed to estimate their enrollment numbers in order to be able to request C2 support while construction is underway



# Entering District-Wide Enrollment

- If you want to use enrollment that is different than the discount data, enter that information in EPC during the annual “Admin Window”
- Data will stay “stagnant” unless you update it (only update if enrollment increases)
- EPC Landing Page > District Name > Manage Organization > Scroll to bottom of page

Note: For small school districts, the system won't calculate using the hybrid method if you enter a single number for the whole district.

**Category Two (C2) Budget Information**

We calculate your Category Two budget and your discount rate separately, and so we collect separate numbers for each. You are allowed to re-use your Category Two student count from year to year within a Category Two budget cycle, so this number needs to be updated less frequently than the student count for your discount rate.

How does the district report its student count for Category Two budget? ⓘ \*

One number for my whole district

A number for each school in the district

**Sum of Student Counts of all Schools in the District**  
1605

**School Information**

Entity Number or Name

--Please enter an entity name(at least 3 characters) or an entity number--

APPLY FILTERS CLEAR FILTERS

Entity Number	Entity Name	Total Students for C2 budget	Is the student count estimated? ⓘ	Eligible for C2 budget?	
16906	JOE WALKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	219	N/A	✓	UPDATE
16932	CLAYSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	531	N/A	✓	EDIT
16936	MCGUFFEY MIDDLE SCHOOL	374	N/A	✓	EDIT

Adjusting these will NOT update your enrollment used for your discount rate.

# Single-Schools

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- Or, if you are a single school that is not part of a district, your C2 enrollment screen would look like this:

## Category Two (C2) Budget Information

We calculate your Category Two budget and your discount rate separately, and so we collect separate numbers for each. You are allowed to re-use your Category Two student count from year to year within a Category Two budget cycle, so this number needs to be updated less frequently than the student count for your discount rate.

### Total Students for C2 Budget \*

### FCC Registration Number ⓘ

# Equipment Transfer Rules

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- **Equipment may be transferred between buildings beginning July 1, 2021**
  - If equipment is transferred between buildings within 5 years from date of purchase, must record reason and date of transfer and update asset inventory
    - No notice to USAC is required
  - Asset inventory must be updated and retained for 10 years from date of purchase
  - Equipment may be disposed of, sold, transferred, etc. from 5 years from the date of installation
    - No notice to USAC required but asset inventory must be updated

Basically, this means that starting 7/1/2021, any E-rate funded equipment may be moved between buildings, regardless of when it was purchased or installed

# NIFs Still Not Eligible for C2 Funding

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- Non-instructional facilities (NIFs) continue to be ineligible for C2 funding
- Equipment may be housed at a NIF, however
- On the Form 471, must deduct proportional share of NIFs use of any shared equipment
  - For example, if you have a core switch, it may be housed at the admin building, but a portion of the pre-discount cost must be declared ineligible
  - Can be straight allocation (4 schools + 1 admin buildings = 20% ineligible)
  - Or can be other method (# of users, square footage of buildings, etc.)
  - Just keep documentation of how the cost allocation was calculated

# FY 2021 “Admin Window”

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- Admin Window is 3 months when schools and libraries update their profiles in EPC
  - This typically means updating enrollment/NSLP data (schools) and square footage changes (libraries)
  - This data is then ported over into the Form 471
  - Admin Window cannot be open during Form 471 window and usually closes 2 days before Form 471 filing window opens in January
  - Admin Window opened Monday, October 19
- Changes for FY 2021 Admin Window:
  - Removed “part time” and “peak part time” student fields
  - Removed IMLS designations
  - Added 3 new “sub-types” of schools which could increase your E-rate C2 budget

# 3 New School “Subtypes” in EPC

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- **General Use School:**

Offers instruction to students drawn from other schools within a district, and student counts can change throughout the year. Some examples of general-use schools within a district are magnet schools, special education units, computer centers, or career centers.

- **Detention Center:** Treated in the same way as a juvenile justice facility.

- **Swing School:**

Temporarily houses students from a school may need to be relocated due to closure, construction, or a revamping of their technological infrastructure at the school.

-- **Note:** A swing school differs from an annex. An annex is considered a part of the school it shares an entity number with rather than a temporary relocation site, while a swing space – although associated with a school – is part of the school district where the school is located and is considered a school in its own right with its own entity number.

**Good News! All 3 subtypes will be eligible for the \$25,000 C2 funding floor. So if you have an existing annex or building that should be classified as one of these, it's best to create a new entity number for it. Call CSB at 888-203-8100 to do so.**

# When to Update Admin Window

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- Admin Window opened today but I do not recommend you update your data yet
  - Julie typically sends draft enrollment/NSLP data to PA listserve in mid December for schools to use when they update their profiles
  - But this year, there are widespread reports of parents not returning free/reduced lunch applications, thus your discount calculations could be lower this year
  - Recommend you wait further guidance
    - I will likely recommend that you do not adjust your enrollment/NSLP data this year and use last year's data (which will remain in the system)
    - Only update your discount data if your NSLP eligibility has increased over last year
    - Only update Category 2 data if applying for C2 funding in FY 2021 and your enrollment has increased over last year

# Other FY 2021 Form Changes

- **Form 470:** No changes, not even to C1 drop down menus
  - Be sure to use 470 “cheat sheet” to select the correct service description:
  - <http://e-ratepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Internet-Access-Form-470-Filing-Cheat-Sheet.pdf>
  - Form 470 changes supposed to be coming next year

Category 1 Form 470 Drop Down Cheat Sheet

	If you want...	Select this 470 Drop Down Option	RFP Required?
Broadband Transport	Leased Lit Fiber Connectivity	Leased Lit Fiber (with or without Internet Access) <i>Must explain service request in narrative text box</i>	No
	Leased Dark Fiber Connectivity	Leased Dark Fiber and Leased Lit Fiber <i>Must seek bids for both services, then evaluate all proposals. Also must state minimum and maximum capacity needs in the narrative text box plus # of leases if fiber circuits being requested.</i>	YES
	Self Provisioned Fiber (applicant owned)	Self-Provisioned Network (Applicant Owned and Operated Network) and Services Provided Over Third-Party Networks <i>Must seek bids for all services, then evaluate all proposals.</i>	YES
	Non-Fiber Connectivity (coaxial cable, microwave, copper, etc.)	Transport Only – No ISP Service (Non-Fiber)	No
	Category 1 Network Equipment	Network Equipment	YES
	Maintenance and Operations	Maintenance and Operations	YES
Internet	Internet Access with FIBER Transport	Leased Lit Fiber (with or without Internet Access) <i>Must provide Internet bandwidth amounts in narrative text box.</i>	No
	Internet Access with NON-FIBER transport (for example, cable modem, DSL)	Internet Access and Transport Bundled <i>Cannot specify which transport type you're seeking.</i>	No
	Commodity Internet Access (no transport)	Internet Access: ISP Service Only	No

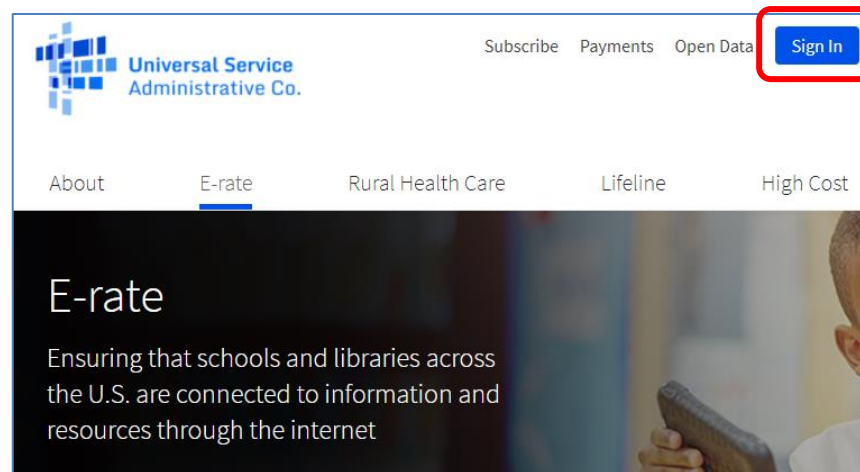
- **Form 471:**
  - Easier navigation from FRN to FRN Line Items
  - Ability to easily access narrative text box while creating FRN Line Items
    - No addition of FRN Line Item narrative text boxes
  - Will no longer request bandwidth questions when selecting Taxes/Fees



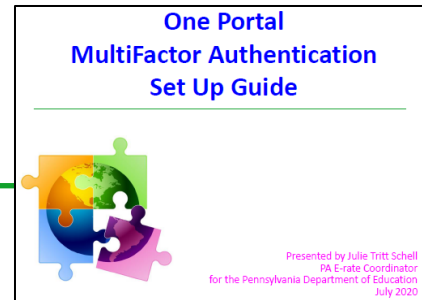
# One Portal – Have You Signed Up Yet?

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- New One Portal Log-In System houses both EPC and BEAR systems
  - Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) required to log-in
  - Required to comply with federal electronic security requirements
  - Two forms of authentication are required for each log-in
    - EPC password
    - 6-digit code sent to either e-mail or text
  - To enter BEAR system, BEAR PIN also required
  - Will be required to set up text/e-mail validation code notification preferences first time logging in to EPC
- To enter One Portal, click the blue **Sign In** button at the top of the main page of the USAC website.



# One Portal Set-Up



- Set-up requires multiple steps
- Guide available at: <http://e-ratepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/One-Portal-MFA-Set-Up-Guide.pdf>
- Common problems with One Portal set-up:
  - If you are not currently an EPC User for your school or library, you cannot set up your One Portal account
    - First, have your EPC Account Administrator establish you as a New User
    - Then log in again and you should be recognized to set up your One Portal account
    - If your EPC AA is no longer with the school/library, call CSB and they can assist or if you experience problems setting up your One Portal account, call CSB at 888-203-8100
  - Be sure to use Chrome or Firefox browsers, and disable all privacy features

# Dashboard: You're In!

Universal Service Administrative Co. Sign Out

Dashboard jtschell@comcast.net

### Schools and Libraries

E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) - E-rate Program participants use the E-rate Productivity Center to manage program processes, receive notifications and to contact customer service.

FCC Form 472 (BEAR) - Applicants file an FCC Form 472 (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form) to request reimbursement from USAC for the discount amount of the eligible products or services that the applicant has received and paid for in full.

### Help?

Send us a message [Click here](#)

Call us (888) 641-8722

One Portal Dashboard will show this screen if you have access to both EPC and BEAR systems:

- To enter **EPC**, click **here**:
- To enter the **BEAR** system, click **here**:

Note: If entering the BEAR system, it will *also* require you to log in using your BEAR PIN

Applicant Login:

BEN: 126066

PIN: .....

Email: jtschell@comcast.net

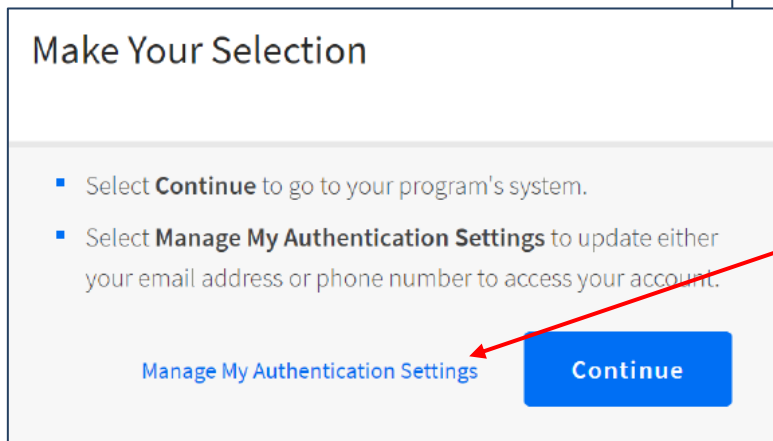
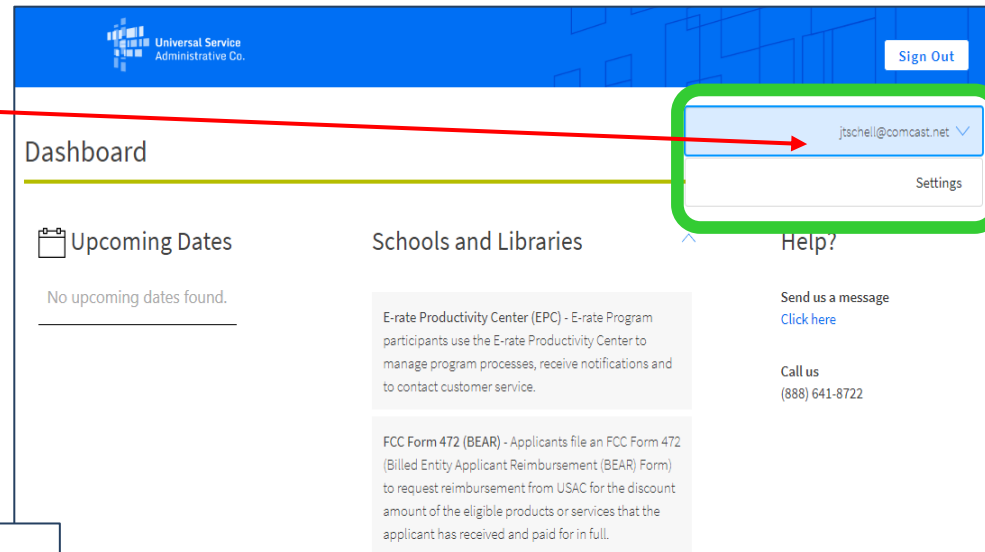
Last Name: schell

Login

- Don't have a BEAR PIN? Use this guide: <http://e-ratepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Form-472-BEAR-PIN-Request-Guide.pdf>

# Adding Text MFA Option

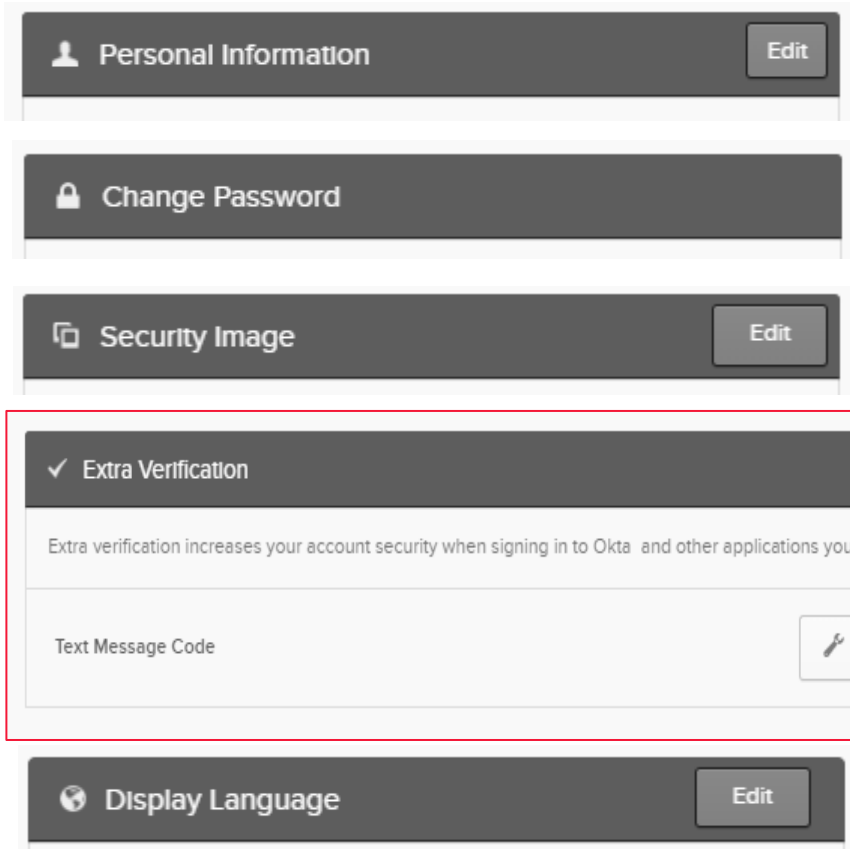
If you see the Dashboard, click your **Username (email address)** in the top right corner of Dashboard, then **Settings** to change your profile/settings, including adding text authentication.



If you just see this screen, click **Manage My Authentication Settings** to change your profile/settings, including adding text authentication.

# Updating Settings/Profile

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On this page, you can add or modify any of these items.

To add the option of receiving verification codes via text to your cell phone, click on **Extra Verification**, then **Setup**.

# Adding Text MFA Option

Enter your cell phone number, then click **Send Code**. A validation code will immediately be sent via text.

Set Up Text Message Verification

Enter the phone number you'll use to receive codes via text message, then click Send Code to verify that it works.

Country

United States

Select the country where your phone is registered.

Phone number

(717) 574-xxx

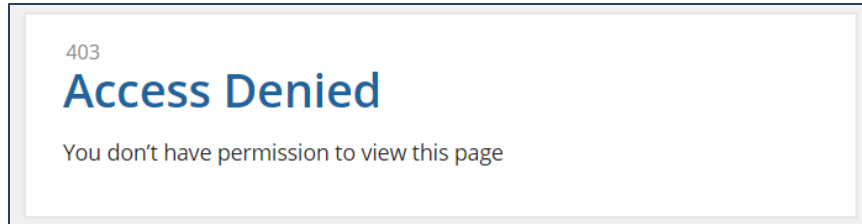
Enter your number the way you normally dial it. Do not add your country code prefix.

Send Code

# Timed Out

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- If you are idle more than 60 minutes, One Portal will log-out and you will see this screen when you attempt to click on anything on the page:



- If this happens, return to the USAC main page and click Sign In to restart the One Portal log in process: <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/>

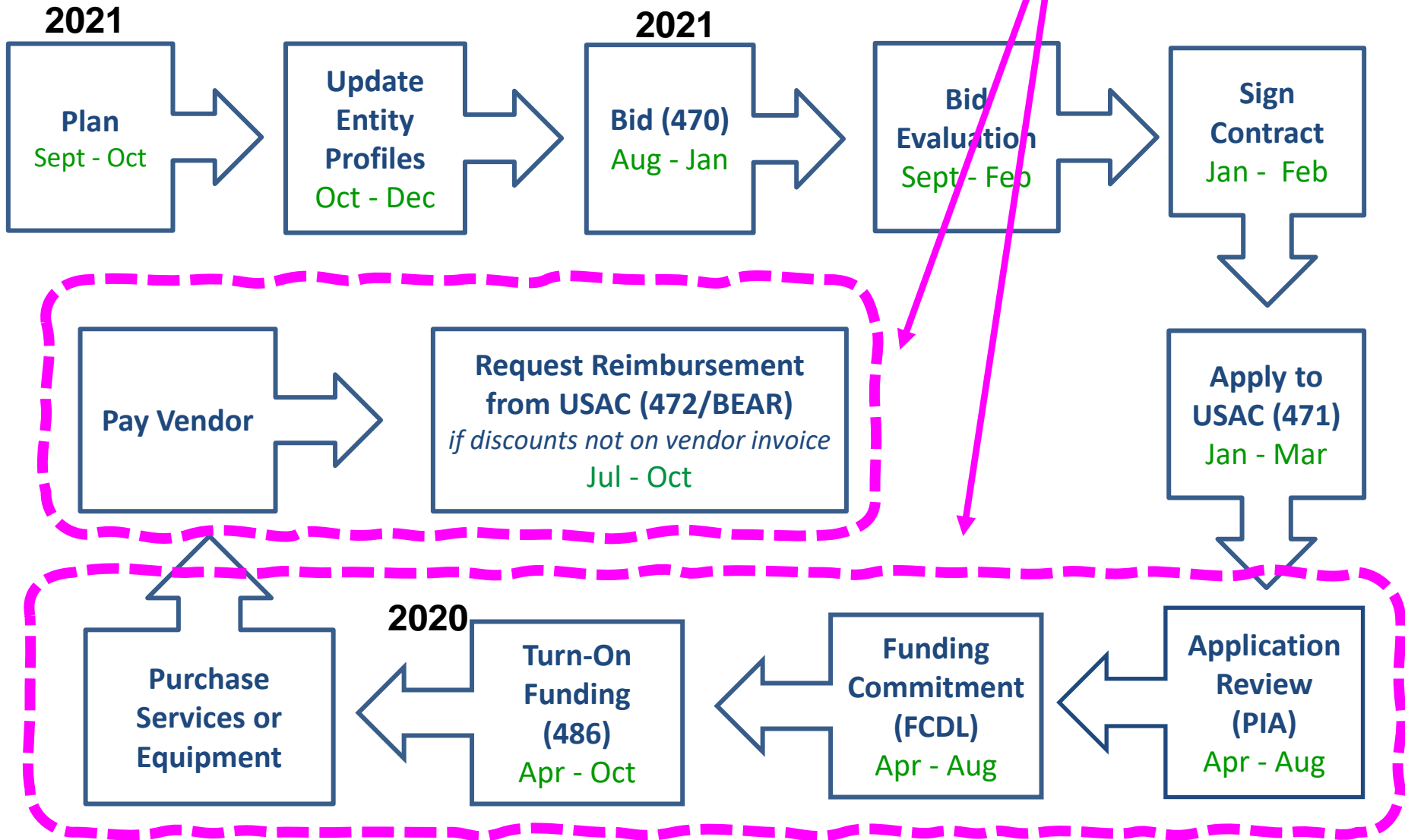
# ***Finishing FY 2020***





# The E-rate Cycle

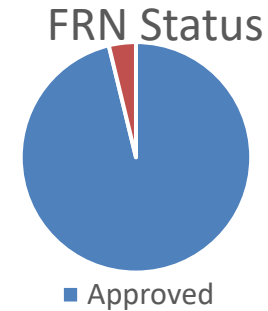
For FY 2020, we are here



# Status of PA FY 2020 FCDLs

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- 2630 FRNs submitted
  - \$52.6 million committed thus far
    - \$21.7 funded for Category 2
  - 100 FRNs still “pending” for 24 entities
    - Requesting about \$6 million
    - About 1/2 are for Category 2
- Compared to the same time last year, we are at about the same place
- COVID slowed down PIA reviews significantly
- 2<sup>nd</sup> window application processing has extended completion goal until December 31, 2020 for all remaining applications, including COVID apps



# FY 2020 Sources of Confusion

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- FY 2020 Denials:
  - Only 10 FRNs denied = .3%
  - 1/2 used consultants
  - 3 libraries, 3 districts, 3 nonpublic schools
  - 4 Category 1 Denials: 3 redundant internet, 1 price of eligible services not most heavily weighted factor
  - 6 Category 2 Denials: 2 requested ineligible firewall features, 1 470 for MIBS didn't provide enough details, 1 requested ineligible product, 1 exceeded C2 budget (and didn't reduce it to come into compliance), 1 contract signed before 28-day waiting period expired



# FY 2020 Form 486s

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- If you have been funded for FY 2020, don't forget to file your Form 486 to "turn-on funding"
- Updated 486 Due List being sent this week
- You must wait until you receive an FCDL to file the 486
  - Deadline is 120 days after FCDL date
- VERY easy form to file in EPC (click, click, click)
  - Guide at: <http://e-ratepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Form-486-Filing-Guide-2020-2.pdf>
  - **Be careful when clicking on CIPA certifications**
    - These toggle instead of staying checked!

# FY 2020 Final Reminders:

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- **Category 1:**

- If you submitted a COVID Form 471 in 2<sup>nd</sup> window, you may receive an FCDL with a new FRN or they may revise existing FRN
- If NEW FRN is funded, be sure to file Form 486

- **Category 2:**

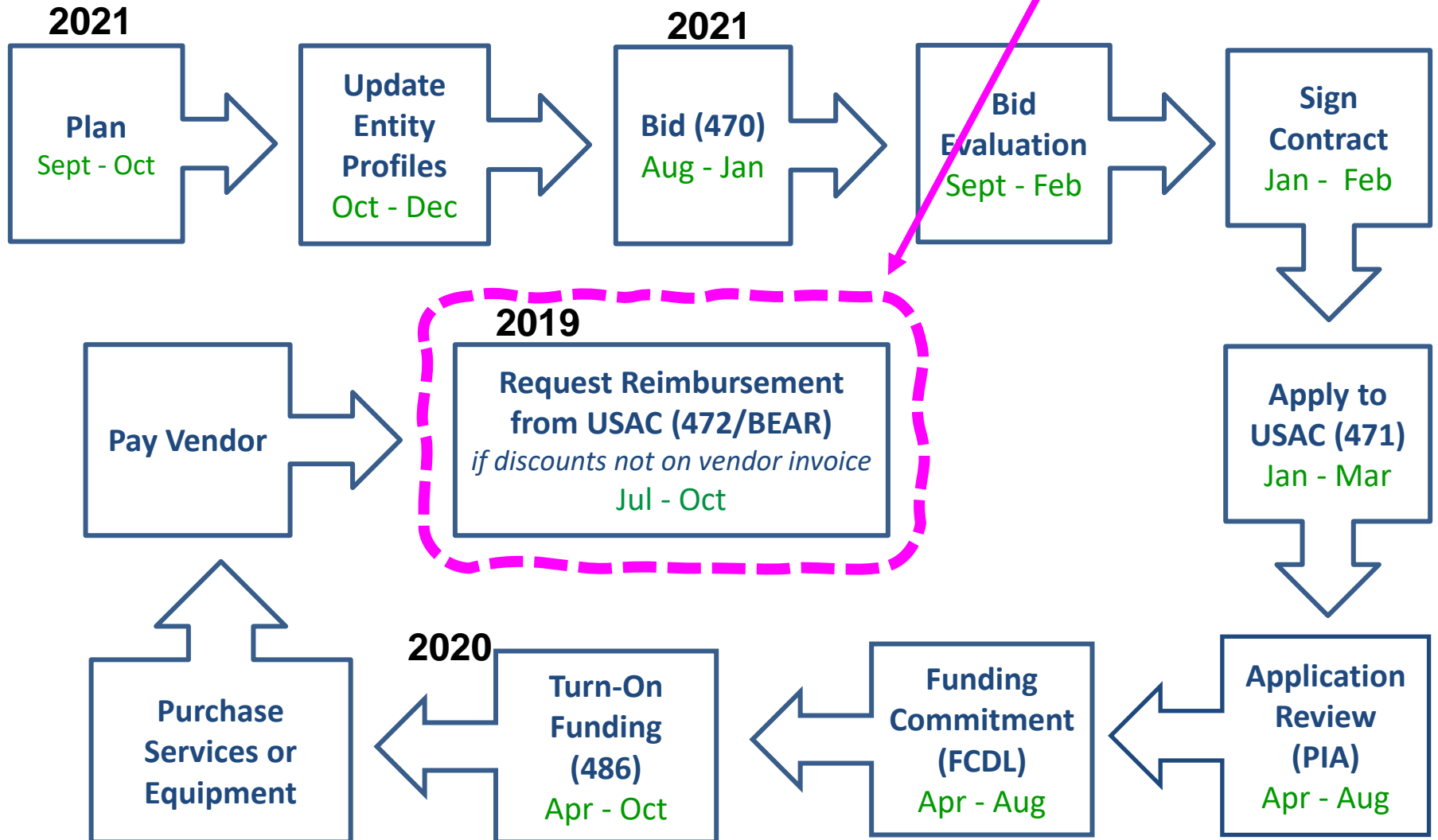
- If you've received C2 funding:
  - Label equipment
  - Track equipment in asset inventory
  - Category 2 Purchasing Guide: <http://e-ratepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Equipment-Purchasing-Guide.pdf>

# *Closing Out FY 2019*



# The E-rate Cycle

For FY 2019, we are here



# FY 2019 BEAR Deadline

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- Recurring Services
  - October 28 is *typically* the deadline to submit a BEAR for recurring services
  - Due to COVID, FCC has extended BEAR deadline until **February 25, 2021** for FY 2019 recurring services
- Non-Recurring Services
  - Deadline to purchase/install FY 2019 non-recurring services (equipment) was September 30, 2020, but FCC extended this deadline by a full year (to September 30, 2021)
  - Thus, the BEAR deadline for these non-recurring FRNs has been extended until **January 28, 2022**
- Who still has to submit a BEAR for FY 2019?  
See: <http://e-ratepa.org/?p=32713> for list



# How to Request BEAR PIN

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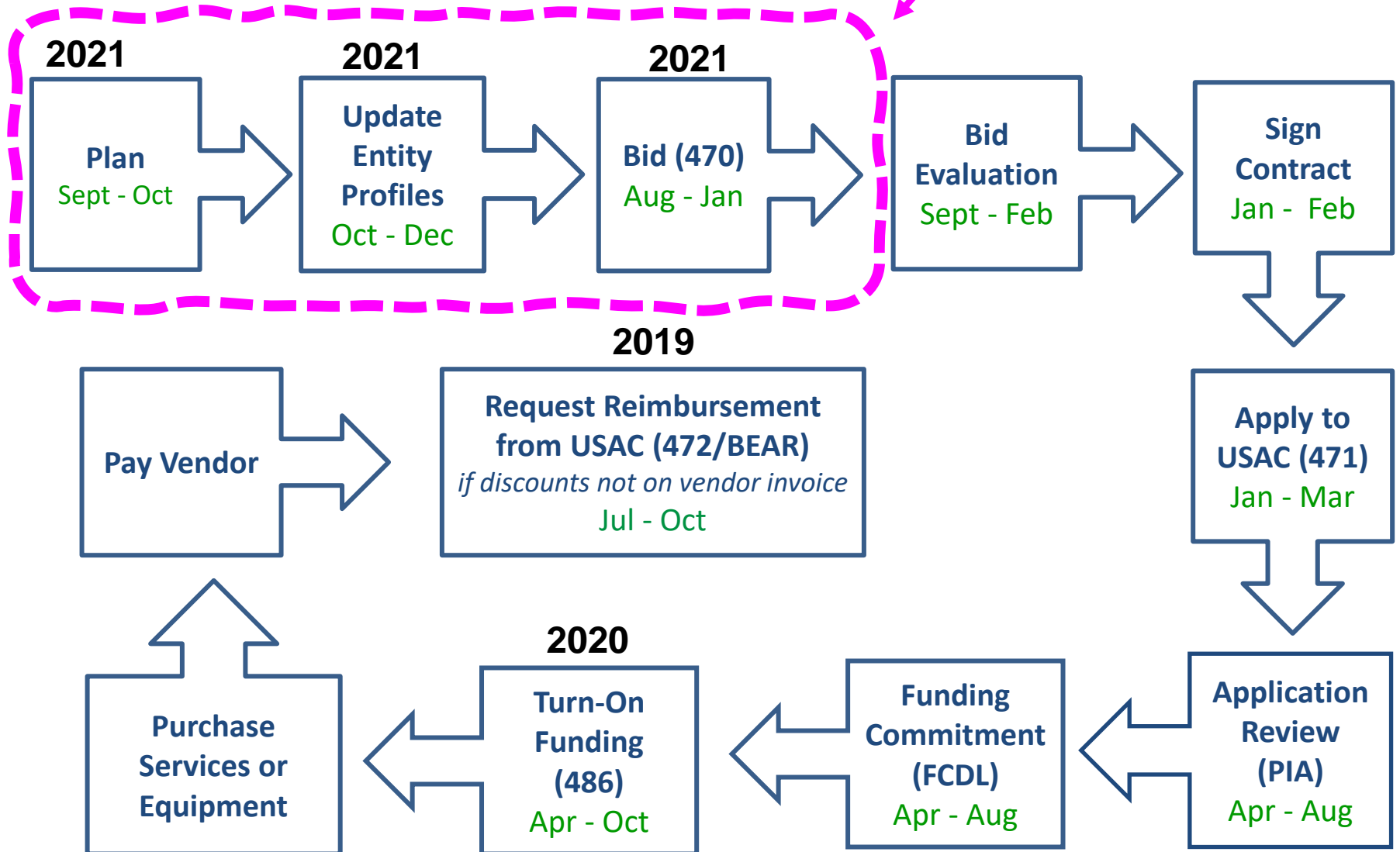
- PINs are person-specific (can't be shared)
- If you don't have a PIN, you must complete a simple template and submit to USAC
  - Template available at:  
<http://www.usac.org/res/documents/sl/xls/PIN-request-template.xlsx>
  - BEAR PIN Request Guide: <http://e-ratepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Form-472-BEAR-PIN-Request-Guide-1.pdf>
  - Submit in EPC using 'Contact Us' feature
  - BEAR PIN will be e-mailed within a week

# Time to Focus on FY 2021!



# The E-rate Cycle

For FY 2021, we are here



# Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

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- USAC considers any bidding document provided to vendors an RFP
- If issuing an RFP (etc.), it must be uploaded with Form 470 at time of filing
  - **Important:** Any addenda or other documents given to vendors after 470 filing must be uploaded to existing 470
  - **Important:** Must restart 28-day clock if any changes are made
- RFPs not required, except for:
  - Minimum state bidding threshold requirements (public schools)
  - All applicants seeking dark fiber or self-provisioned fiber projects

# When Must a Form 470 be Used?

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## Form 470s must be posted...

- 1) Annually for all MTM services
- 2) At the beginning of any new contract
  - If you signed a multi-year contract in a previous year, after posting a Form 470 and waiting 28 days, you are NOT required to post a 470 for the “remaining” years of that contract

## Contract extensions:

- Contract extensions are permitted to be included in the original contract
- Must have a definite end
  - For example, a 3-year contract, with two 1-year renewals is ok and will not require new 470 until the end of 5 years
  - 3-year contract that automatically renews is not ok and will require new 470 at the end of 3 years
- Must notify vendor in writing if you want to exercise one of your contract extensions
  - Can be as simple as an e-mail
  - PIA will ask for this documentation during your application review

# 3 Types of Eligible Category 1 Fiber

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## Leased Lit Fiber

Where vendor  
owns/lights/maintains fiber

## Leased Dark Fiber

Where applicant leases strands of  
fiber but applicant lights fiber

## Self-Provisioned Fiber

Where applicant  
owns/lights/maintains fiber

Review Fiber Eligibility Guide/FAQs.

If interested in either one of **these** two fiber types, please contact me as they contain additional, very specific bidding requirements.

# Deadline to Accept Vendor Bids

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- RFPs always have written deadlines, but what about 470's that don't specify deadline?
- Previous assumption was that vendors had until 28<sup>th</sup> day to submit proposal
- USAC recently ruled that, absent a stated deadline to submit proposals, applicants had to consider all bids that were submitted until bid evaluation was conducted
- Therefore, I now recommend **ALWAYS** listing a proposal due date in the 470 narrative
  - Don't forget, the due date cannot be before the 28<sup>th</sup> day after the 470 was posted

# FY 2021 Form 471 Application Window

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- Not yet announced
- Likely ~**January 8 – March 18?**
- Recommended timeline:
  - NOVEMBER: File all Form 470s by Thanksgiving
  - DECEMBER: Vendor bids submitted
  - JANUARY: Bid evaluation, board agenda submission
  - FEBRUARY: School board approval, sign contracts
  - MARCH: File Form 471
- **Form 470s being accepted in EPC NOW**
  - Don't wait until January to file 470s



# FY 2021 Questions to Ask Yourself

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- Is 470 Needed for FY 2021?
  - **Category 1:** Review existing contracts to determine when they expire
    - Extend, if desired and if options available
    - If contract expiring, decide if additional bandwidth is needed
    - Review Julie's Category 1 bidding list
  - **Category 2:** Determine what equipment/wiring is needed for each school over next 12 months
    - Research options, prepare bid-list
- If so, what will be my bidding dates?
- What date will I obtain board approval?
  - What is the deadline to add items to the board agenda?
  - Be sure board meeting date is before Form 471 due date which is likely to be mid-March
- When will I file the Form 471?
  - The earlier you file the sooner you're likely to be funded!
- Will I update enrollment/NSLP for FY 2021 or use last year's data?
- Do I, personally, have a BEAR PIN? If not, follow this guide: <http://e-ratepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Form-472-BEAR-PIN-Request-Guide.pdf>

**Create a detailed timeline, mark it on your calendar, and follow your plan!**

# Upcoming E-rate Trainings

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- November:
  - Category 1 Eligibility & Form 470 Bidding
  - Category 2 Eligibility & Bidding Public Schools
    - Will include PEPPM mini-bid option
  - Category 2 Eligibility & Bidding Non-Pubs/Libraries
- January/February:
  - Category 1 Form 471 Training
  - Category 2 Form 471 Training
- Reminder: All training material posted at [www.e-ratepa.org](http://www.e-ratepa.org) under Training/Outreach tab
- Also, there are some organizations offering E-rate training by “experts” for a fee. If you choose to pay for training, please know that I am not involved with these efforts and so any PA-specific laws, eligibility, etc. will not be included

# Where to Go For E-rate Help

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- **USAC's Client Service Bureau (CSB)**
  - E-rate “Help Desk” where applicant & service providers can get answers to questions
  - Call **888-203-8100**
  - Submit a ‘Customer Service Case’ in EPC
- **PA E-rate Coordinator**
  - E-mail [jtschell@comcast.net](mailto:jtschell@comcast.net)
  - Attend webinars!
  - Read listserve messages!
  - [www.e-ratepa.org](http://www.e-ratepa.org)
    - Helpful Documents: [http://e-ratepa.org/?page\\_id=754](http://e-ratepa.org/?page_id=754)
    - Training: [http://e-ratepa.org/?page\\_id=745](http://e-ratepa.org/?page_id=745)
    - Onboarding Guide: [http://e-ratepa.org/?page\\_id=747](http://e-ratepa.org/?page_id=747)



# Questions?

