October 14, 2026

Competitive Bidding Moves to a Centralized Portal



TREND AT A GLANCE

The FCC adopted rules establishing a USAC-managed competitive bidding portal. The FCC announced OMB approval on September 14, 2026, and the relevant information-collection requirements became effective September 24, 2026.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR RESELLERS

- Applicants and service providers will need bid-management and documentation processes aligned to the new portal requirements.
- Early engagement matters as customers prepare Form 470 activity and internal procurement workflows.
- Compliance-ready processes can help resellers respond consistently and preserve required records.

RESELLER ACTIONS

Review the FCC order and current USAC implementation guidance.

Map who owns portal access, bid submission, approvals, and record retention.

Keep customer conversations focused on functional requirements and fair, open competition.

WHAT TO WATCH

USAC portal instructions and implementation dates.

Related modernization changes involving recordkeeping, spam or late bids, bandwidth increases, invoicing, and the future elimination of Form 486.

Any additional FCC or USAC readiness communications for applicants and service providers.

SUGGESTED RESELLER TALK TRACK

Opportunity: "The new competitive-bidding portal gives prepared resellers a timely opportunity to differentiate as trusted E-Rate partners—not simply product providers.

Proof point: Beginning with Funding Year 2028, service providers will submit bids through the USAC-managed portal, and applicants will upload bid-evaluation, vendor-selection, and contract documentation after choosing a provider. This creates a clear need for disciplined bid preparation, documented handoffs, and accurate records across the sales cycle.

Reseller benefit: Teams that prepare early can respond more consistently, reduce avoidable submission issues, and make the buying process easier for schools and libraries. A repeatable workflow for portal access, bid development, compliance review, approvals, deadlines, and record retention also helps sellers spend less time resolving process gaps and more time advancing qualified opportunities.

How we help: We can help your organization turn readiness into a stronger market position: align each response to the customer's stated Form 470 and RFP requirements, build confidence through clear documentation, and create a scalable process your team can use across future E-Rate pursuits.

The result: a smoother customer experience, stronger reseller differentiation, and a more credible foundation for long-term education-market growth."

OFFICIAL REFERENCES

- FCC: OMB Approval of E-Rate Bidding Portal and Modernization Rules — released September 24, 2026.
- FCC 26-30: Report and Order — adopted April 30 and released May 1, 2026.
- USAC: E-Rate Competitive Bidding — official applicant-process guidance.

Important: Use the rules and Eligible Services List applicable to the funding year. Proposed rules are not final requirements.