E-Rate - Schools & Libraries USF Program

Telecommunications Access Policy Division

The schools and libraries universal service support program, commonly known as the E-rate program, helps schools and libraries to obtain affordable broadband.

Eligible schools, school districts and libraries may apply individually or as part of a consortium. Funding may be requested under two categories of service: category one services to a school or library (telecommunications, telecommunications services and Internet access), and category two services that deliver Internet access within schools and libraries (internal connections, basic maintenance of internal connections, and managed internal broadband services). Discounts for support depend on the level of poverty and whether the school or library is located in an urban or rural area. The discounts range from 20 percent to 90 percent of the costs of eligible services. E-rate program funding is based on demand up to an annual Commission-established cap of $4.456 billion.

The E-rate program is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company under the direction of the FCC. Specifically, USAC is responsible for processing the applications for support, confirming eligibility, and reimbursing service providers and eligible schools and libraries for the discounted services. USAC also ensures that the applicants and service providers comply with the E-rate rules and procedures established by the Commission.

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