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Oct 17, 2023

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ASSISTANCE LISTINGS

UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND - SCHOOLS and LIBRARIES

Assistance Listing

Popular Name
UNIVERSAL SERVICE - E-RATE

Department/Ind. Agency
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Assistance Listing Number
32.004

Related Federal Assistance
[32.009](#)

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Overview

Objectives

The schools and libraries universal service support program, commonly known as the E-Rate program, helps eligible schools and libraries to obtain affordable broadband services, internal connections, and maintenance of internal connections. The E-Rate program was authorized by Congress as part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (the Telecommunications Act), and created by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) in 1997 to, among other things, enhance, to the extent technically feasible and economically reasonable, access to advanced telecommunications and information services for all public and nonprofit elementary and secondary schools and libraries.

Examples of Funded Projects

Fiscal Year 2022: Providing funding for telecommunications, telecommunications services and Internet access services delivered to schools and libraries, and internal connections, basic maintenance of internal connections, and managed internal broadband service that deliver Internet access within schools and libraries.

Assistance Listing Description

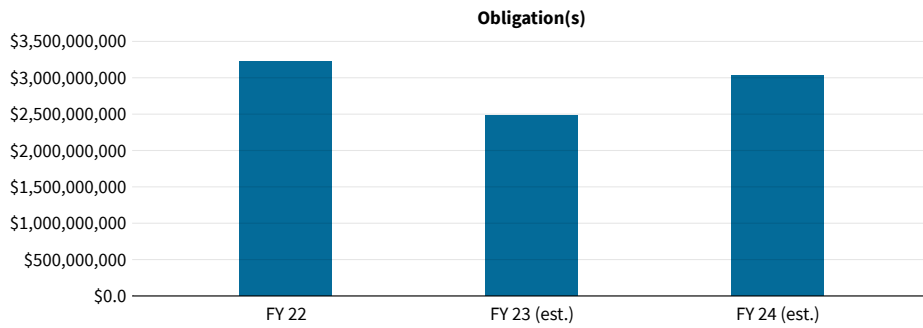
The purpose of the E-Rate program is to provide financial assistance to eligible schools, libraries and consortia of eligible schools and libraries in the form of discounts to obtain affordable broadband Internet access, telecommunications services, internal network connections, basic maintenance of internal connections, and managed internal broadband services.

Authorizations

The E-Rate program was authorized as part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and created through rulemaking by the Commission in 1997 to, among other things, enhance, to the extent technically feasible and economically reasonable, access to advanced telecommunications and information services for all public and nonprofit elementary and secondary schools and libraries. Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (1996), Title 47, Section 254

Financial Information

These funding amounts do not reflect the award amounts that are displayed on [USASpending.gov](#)



Obligation(s)	FY 22	FY 23 (est.)	FY 24 (est.)
☐ Direct Payments for Specified Use Total	\$3,224,900,000	\$2,478,500,000	\$3,025,500,000
Totals	\$3,224,900,000	\$2,478,500,000	\$3,025,500,000

Range and Average of Financial Assistance

Accomplishments

Not Applicable.

Account Identification

27-5182-0-2-376-See Appendix II of CFDA Listing

Criteria for Applying

Types of Assistance

C - Direct Payments for Specified Use

Credentials and Documentation

The following forms are required: • FCC Form 470 - Description of Services Requested and Certification Form • FCC Form 471 - Description of Services Ordered and Certification Form • FCC Form 486 - Receipt of Service Confirmation and Children's Internet Protection Act Certification Form • FCC Form 472 - Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form or FCC Form 474 - Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Form • FCC Form 473 - Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form • FCC Form 498 - Service Provider and Billed Entity Identification Number and General Contact Information Form. E-Rate applicants who only use the service provider invoicing (SPI) method and do not receive any direct disbursements are not required to register in SAM.gov or obtain a unique entity identifier (UEI) number. E-Rate applicants and service providers who invoice through the billed entity applicant (BEAR) or SPI invoice methods are required to register in SAM.gov and obtain a UEI number to receive direct disbursements through the programs. This program is excluded from coverage under 2 CFR 200, Subpart E - Cost Principles.

Applicant Eligibility

Designations

Other public institution/organization, Local (includes State-designated Indian Tribes, excludes institutions of higher education and hospitals, Other private institutions/organizations)

Schools must meet the statutory definition of elementary and secondary schools as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 7801(18) and 20 U.S.C. § 7801(38). Libraries must meet the statutory definition of library or library consortium found in the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) under 20 U.S.C. § 9122, and must be eligible for assistance from a state library administrative agency under that Act. In 2021, the Commission modified its definition of library to include Tribal libraries, clarifying that Tribal libraries are eligible for E-Rate support. Schools and libraries may not operate as for-profit businesses. Schools with endowments exceeding \$50,000,000 are also not eligible.

Beneficiary Eligibility

Designations

Local, Other public institution/organization Beneficiary eligibility is the same as applicant eligibility.

Elementary and secondary public and private schools; public, academic, research, and private libraries; consortia of eligible schools and libraries.

Length and Time Phasing of Assistance

Funding applications (FCC Form 471) are generally submitted between January and March before the start of the upcoming funding year. The funding year starts July 1 and ends June 30 of the following year. Applicants must reapply for E-Rate funding each year. Recurring services must be delivered by the end of the applicable funding year (i.e., June 30), while non-recurring services must be delivered or installed by September 30 following the close of the funding year. The last date to invoice (FCC Form 472 or 474) is generally October 28 for recurring services and January 28 for non-recurring services. Some deadlines can be extended in certain limited circumstances. Method of awarding/releasing assistance: Funding commitments are awarded to applicants through a Funding Commitment Decision Letter.

Use of Assistance

Designations

Elementary/Secondary Education, Libraries/Information/Statistics, Communications

E-Rate support provides beneficiaries with discounts on the costs of eligible telecommunications services, broadband Internet access, internal network connections, managed internal broadband services, and basic maintenance of internal connections. The E-Rate program discount matrix governs the amount of funding eligible schools, libraries, and consortia are eligible to receive based on the percent of students in the school district eligible for the National Free and Reduced School Lunch Program and whether the entity is located in a rural or urban area. The discounts range from 20 to 90 percent of the costs of eligible equipment and/or services. The Commission issues an Eligible Services List (ESL) each year identifying the services and equipment that are eligible for support. End-user devices such as computers, tablets, cell phones and display screens are not eligible for support. Voice services, such as mobile and landline telephone service, are not eligible for support. The E-Rate program does not provide support for most off-campus services and E-Rate applicants are, therefore, usually required to cost-allocate out of their funding requests any portion of eligible services used off-campus.

Applying for Assistance

Deadlines

The window to submit funding applications (FCC Form 471) is generally between January and March before the start of the funding year (July 1). The FCC E-Rate administrator's website will post an announcement about the upcoming application filing window and deadline. Generally, the application filing dates are announced toward the end of the calendar year preceding the opening of the new funding window. The FCC's E-Rate program administrator is the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC).

Preapplication Coordination

Preapplication coordination is not applicable. Environmental impact information is not required for this program. This program is excluded from coverage under E.O. 12372.

Application Procedures

2 CFR 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards applies to this program. 2 CFR 200, Subpart E, Cost Principles does not apply to this program. Applicants prepare for competitive bidding, conduct competitive bidding by requesting bids for eligible equipment and services (FCC Form 470), evaluate bids and select a service provider. Applicants must select the most cost-effective service offering using price of the eligible equipment and services as the primary factor. Then, they submit a funding application (FCC Form 471). Funding requests that are approved will be awarded through a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL). The applicant that receives an FCDL must then notify USAC and certify that the billed entity and/or the eligible entities that it represents is receiving, or has received, service in the relevant funding year from its named service provider(s) (FCC Form 486). After equipment or services have been delivered, either the applicant or the service provider may initiate invoicing to receive funds by submitting a request for reimbursement (FCC Form 472 or FCC Form 474) to USAC.

Criteria for Selecting Proposals

Not Applicable.

Award Procedure

USAC reviews each funding application to ensure compliance with program rules and procedures. The competitive bidding, program application and other required program processes described herein are governed by the FCC's rules at 47 CFR Section 54.500 et. seq. and associated FCC Orders for the E-Rate program. After a submitted application undergoes an E-Rate program review, the applicant will receive a Funding Commitment Decision Letter providing the total amount of approved support for each funding request or indicating that their funding request has been denied.

Date Range for Approval/Disapproval

The Commission has not set a specific date range for funding decisions but has a program target to encourage efficient processing of program applications. The target is for USAC to issue funding commitments or denials for all "workable" funding requests by September 1st of each funding

year. "Workable" means that a funding request is filed timely and is complete, with all necessary information, to enable a USAC reviewer to make the appropriate funding decision, and the applicant, provider, and any consultants are not subject to investigation, audit, or other similar reason for delay in a funding decision.

Renewals

Not Applicable.

Appeals

From 30 to 60 days. An appeal of an E-Rate program decision or request for waiver of the E-Rate rules must be filed within 60 days of the date of an action or decision by USAC.

Compliance Requirements

Policy Requirements

The following 2CFR policy requirements apply to this assistance listing:

Subpart B, General provisions

Subpart C, Pre-Federal Award Requirements and Contents of Federal Awards

Subpart D, Post Federal; Award Requirements

The following 2CFR policy requirements are excluded from coverage under this assistance listing:

Subpart E, Cost Principles

Subpart F, Audit Requirements

Additional Information: In accordance with the provisions of 2 CFR § 200, only a limited number of sections of Subparts C-D apply to the E-Rate program, specifically: 2 CFR § 200.203 - Requirement to provide public notice of Federal financial assistance programs; 2 CFR § 200.303 - Internal controls; and 2 CFR §§ 200.331-333 - Subrecipient Monitoring and Management.

Reports

Audits

This program is excluded from coverage under 2 CFR 200, Subpart F - Audit Requirements.

Additional audit requirements:

Participants may be subject to program compliance audits through USAC's Beneficiary and Contributor Compliance Audits program to ensure compliance with program rules and orders. USAC conducts these audits with FCC oversight. Also, the Payment Quality Assurance (PQA) program allows USAC to provide the FCC with information about improper payments to program beneficiaries, as required by the Payment Integrity Information Act. Through the PQA program, USAC assesses specific payments made to select beneficiaries to test whether these payments were made in accordance with FCC rules. Using the results of these assessments, USAC calculates estimates of the improper payment rates and provides this information to the FCC.

Records

Applicants and service providers are required to retain receipt and delivery records relating to pre-bidding, bidding, contracts, application process, invoices, provision of services, and other matters relating to their compliance with E-Rate program rules for a period of at least 10 years after the latter of the last day of the applicable funding year or the service delivery deadline for the funding request.

Regulations, Guidelines, and Literature

Program regulations (at 47 CFR §§ 54.500 et seq.), Orders, Public Notices, News Releases, program forms, form instructions, and other announcements for the program.

Formula and Matching Requirements

Statutory formula is not applicable to this assistance listing.

Matching requirements are not applicable to this assistance listing.

MOE requirements are not applicable to this assistance listing.

Contact Information

Regional or Local Locations:

None. Federal Communications Commission, Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB), Telecommunications Access Policy Division

Headquarters Office:

Johnnay Schrieber, Deputy Division Chief, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau

45 L Street, NE,

Washington, DC 20554

✉ johnnay.schrieber@fcc.gov

☎ 2024187400

🌐 **Website:** <https://www.fcc.gov/general/e-rate-schools-libraries-usf-program>

History

- 2023
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