

GET E-RATE FUNDING FOR YOUR DISTRICT

Funding availability

How to apply



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AGENDA



- ▶ Federal funding program, administered by the FCC
 - ▶ Not a competitive grant
 - ▶ Funded by fee on phone bills
- ▶ Objective: to bring broadband to classrooms and libraries
- ▶ Awards \$3 billion in funding per year
 - ▶ Could award \$4 billion if demand were higher
- ▶ Schools and libraries must apply for funding each year
 - ▶ Must apply during application window

OVERVIEW



- ▶ The E-Rate is going away
 - ▶ The program is growing, though it does face challenges
- ▶ My district can't get funding for internal connections
 - ▶ All districts can now get this funding, up to a point
- ▶ A technology plan is required for E-Rate
 - ▶ No longer required
- ▶ The “filing window” is for Forms 470 as well as 471
 - ▶ The “filing window” is only for the Form 471
 - ▶ The Form 470 can be filed months in advance of the window

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS



- ▶ Funding = discount x expenditures
- ▶ Discount based on low-income (NSLP) students
 - ▶ About half of NH districts have a 50% discount
 - ▶ Another third have a 60% discount
- ▶ Expenditures are:
 - ▶ C1: Whatever the district spends on eligible broadband
 - ▶ C2: Eligible expenditures capped at \$167/student through 2025

%NSLP, Free or Reduced	CATEGORY ONE		CATEGORY TWO	
	URBAN Discount	RURAL Discount	URBAN Discount	RURAL Discount
Less than 1%	20%	25%	20%	25%
1% to 19%	40%	50%	40%	50%
20% to 34%	50%	60%	50%	60%
35% to 49%	60%	70%	60%	70%
50% to 74%	80%	80%	80%	80%
75% to 100%	90%	90%	85%	85%

FUNDING POTENTIAL



- ▶ Budget district-wide
- ▶ Current budget cycle ends with Funding Year 2025-2026
- ▶ Funding cap set at \$167 x enrollment
 - ▶ Will not decrease if enrollment falls
 - ▶ Can be increased if enrollment increases
- ▶ Small schools (less than 150 students) have funding floor of \$25,000

FUNDING POTENTIAL

C2 BUDGETS



- ▶ Districts of 11 or more schools
 - ▶ Choose the greater of enrollment $\times$ \$167 or schools $\times$ \$25,000
- ▶ Districts of 10 or fewer schools
 - ▶ Sum of funding from each school
 - ▶ If enrollment $\geq$ 150: enrollment $\times$ \$167
 - ▶ If enrollment $<$ 150: \$25,000

FUNDING POTENTIAL
C2 BUDGETS: SMALL SCHOOLS



- ▶ Two categories of funding
- ▶ Category 1 (C1): Broadband
 - ▶ Internet connection(s)
 - ▶ Connection(s) between locations (wide area network)
- ▶ Category 2 (C2): Internal Connections
 - ▶ Network equipment (wireless access points, switches, routers, firewalls)
 - ▶ Data network cabling
 - ▶ Maintenance of eligible equipment
 - ▶ **NOT** computers, tablets, smartboards

ELIGIBLE SERVICES OVERVIEW



- ▶ Eligible Services List (ESL) for 2022-2023 not yet released
 - ▶ Will be available at <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/before-you-begin/eligible-services-list/>
 - ▶ No Eligible Services List (ESL) changes expected
 - ▶ Last year's ESL: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-20-1418A1.pdf>
 - ▶ No equipment from “a company that the FCC has designated as a national security threat” (currently Huawei and ZTE, other Chinese companies being added)

ELIGIBLE SERVICES LIST FOR 2022-2023



- ▶ All applications online through EPC portal
 - ▶ Form 470: between now and January; like an RFP
 - ▶ Form 471: dates not set, usually Jan.-Mar
 - ▶ Form 486: after funding approval
 - ▶ Form 498: banking information
 - ▶ Form 472 (BEAR): request reimbursement after paying or receive discounts on bills

HOW TO APPLY



- ▶ Apply through the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC)
- ▶ If no one in your district has an account, call the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Customer Service Bureau (CSB) at **(888) 203-8100**
- ▶ Each district has one EPC Account Administrator, who can create other users and assign privileges

HOW TO APPLY

STEP 0: EPC



- ▶ Like an RFP
- ▶ Description of services you may purchase
- ▶ Can be general or specific
- ▶ Published online; all info available to potential bidders
- ▶ Cannot be changed, but a new one can be posted
- ▶ Must accept bids for at least 28 days
- ▶ **File now** (or at least by the end of December)

HOW TO APPLY

STEP 1: FORM 470



- ▶ After waiting 28 days
- ▶ Select service provider
 - ▶ Existing service can be considered a bid
 - ▶ Price must be most heavily-weighted criterion in decision
 - ▶ If price is not the only factor, create a matrix to document decision
- ▶ Sign contract
 - ▶ Any written notification to selected vendor (can be an email)
 - ▶ Not required for tariff or month-to-month services

HOW TO APPLY

STEP 1 A: SIGN CONTRACT



- ▶ Description of
 - ▶ Services/equipment ordered
 - ▶ Price
 - ▶ Selected vendor
- ▶ Can only be filed during “filing window”
 - ▶ Dates not set yet for FY 2022-2023
 - ▶ Generally early January to mid/late March

HOW TO APPLY

STEP 2: FORM 471



- ▶ All applications reviewed
- ▶ Most reviews will require outreach
 - ▶ 15 days to answer questions about the application
 - ▶ Responses made inside EPC
- ▶ Don't be afraid to contact your reviewer by email or phone

HOW TO APPLY

STEP 2A: PIA REVIEW



- ▶ File after Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) received
- ▶ File on or after July 1, 2022, before October 28, 2022
- ▶ Notifies USAC that invoicing can begin
- ▶ Certifies CIPA compliance

HOW TO APPLY

STEP 3: FORM 486



- ▶ Needs to be filed the first time the district files for funding
- ▶ Needs to be filed any time banking information changes
- ▶ Can only be filed by the district EPC Account Administrator

HOW TO APPLY

STEP A: FORM 498



- ▶ Two funding options:
 - ▶ BEAR: district pays full price to vendor, gets reimbursed by USAC
 - ▶ SPI: vendor bills undiscounted portion to district, the rest to USAC
 - ▶ Not all vendors do SPIs, and not all do it well
- ▶ BEAR (Form 472) filed after district has paid vendor
 - ▶ Can be filed as often as you like: monthly, quarterly, once for the year
- ▶ BEARs sometimes go through a review process

HOW TO APPLY

STEP 4: FORM 472 (BEAR)



- ▶ Not taking advantage of Category 2
- ▶ Not complying with competitive billing rules
 - ▶ Not documenting process
- ▶ Not filing the later forms (486 and BEAR)
- ▶ Missing deadlines
 - ▶ Waiting until the last minute
- ▶ Not responding to PIA (application reviewers)

COMMON MISTAKES



- ▶ The entire funding process, step by step:
<https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/before-you-begin/>
- ▶ C2 budget too:
<https://opendata.usac.org/E-rate/E-rate-C2-Budget-Tool-FY2021-/8z69-hkn7>
- ▶ Tutorials (video walk-throughs of creating the forms):
<https://www.usac.org/e-rate/learn/videos/>

HELPFUL SITES



- ▶ Dan Riordan
- ▶ On-Tech Consulting, Inc.
- ▶ info@on-tech.com

QUESTIONS

