

E-Rate 101: What You Need to Know If You Are New to E-rate

The Universal Service Schools and Libraries Program, commonly referred to as E-Rate, provides discounts to assist eligible schools and libraries to obtain affordable internet access and telecommunications services. E-rate funds the following service types:

- Data Transmission Services and/ or Internet Access
- Internal Connections
- Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS)
- Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections

Discounts range from 20-90 percent of the costs of eligible services, depending on the level of poverty and the urban/rural status at the school district level. Eligible schools, school districts and libraries, may apply individually or as part of a consortium. Starting with Funding Year (FY) 2019, voice services are no longer eligible.

It is also good to know the following about E-Rate:

- The program was created in the Telecommunications Act of 1996
- Funding years are July 1 through June 30 (Category One and Basic Maintenance; MIBS)
Funding years are April 1 through September 30 (Internal Connections)
- Provides subsidies of up to 90% for Category I eligible services
- Provides subsidies of up to 85% for Category II eligible services
- Available to schools and libraries
- Administered by the Universal Service Administration Company (USAC)
- Universal Service Program overseen by FCC
- Service providers must first obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN /service provider 498 ID) by submitting FCC Form 498 and register for DUNS number

- The Applicant
 - Individual K-12 public, private and non-profit
 - School districts
 - Public Libraries
 - Consortia (any combination)
- The Service Providers
 - Resellers
 - Distributors
- Consultants
 - Any non-employee of the entity applying for funding that assists in filling out the application materials for a fee.
 - A consulting firm must obtain a Consultant Registration Number (CRN), a unique eight-digit identification number assigned by USAC. Employees of a consulting firm do not obtain individual CRNs; instead, they use the CRN of the consulting firm that employs them.
 - Ensures fair and open competition.
 - You cannot be a Service Provider and a Consultant. That is a conflict of interest.

For More Information

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