

E-rate Essentials

What bandwidth do I need to support digital learning?

Students need sufficient bandwidth in order to take advantage of digital learning in the classroom. Today, “sufficient” means at least 100 kbps of bandwidth per student, but that number is growing quickly. The Federal Communications Commission suggests a 2018 connectivity target of 1 Mbps per student in order for schools to truly take advantage of technology’s ability to transform teaching and learning. Many schools desire this robust connectivity for their classrooms, but lack the funds necessary to obtain it.

What is E-rate?

The Schools and Libraries Program, also known as E-rate, is a federal program designed to help public schools and libraries afford telecommunication services. As of December 2014, **\$3.9 BILLION** is available annually to help subsidize these costs. School districts can receive federal reimbursements for up to 90% of the cost of their connectivity services.

In order to receive federal reimbursement, districts must file two forms: the Form 470 and the Form 471. A district files a Form 470 to solicit bids for a specified list of products and services. After a competitive bidding process, the district will select a winning vendor and file a Form 471 to request reimbursement for these services. Services that are eligible for reimbursement fall into two groups, known in E-rate as Category 1 and Category 2.

Category 1 vs. Category 2: What’s eligible for reimbursement?

CATEGORY	EXPLANATION	ELIGIBLE SERVICES
Category 1 (Internet Access & Wide Area Network)	Connectivity between sites. C1 covers monthly service charges and non-recurring/construction costs for direct Internet Access and WAN connectivity between campuses, whether it is leased or owned	Fiber (lit and dark) Wireless (e.g., microwave) Cable modem DSL Satellite service Broadband over power lines T-1, T-3 Dial-up Voice services
Category 2 (Internal Connections)	Connectivity within sites. C2 covers Wi-Fi products and services, usually with a non-recurring charge.	Access points Antennas and cabling Caching Network switches Firewall services and components Routers Racks UPS/battery back up Supporting software Managed services (e.g., Wi-Fi) Basic maintenance, repair, and installation

Recommended E-rate Timeline for School Districts



How much funding do schools receive?

Funding is based on the income level of your students, which is usually derived from the number of students who qualify for NSLP free or reduced price lunches. If you don't offer a hot lunch program, you can submit a survey to your families to determine their income level.

The reimbursement you will receive from E-rate is based on locale and student income level, and ranges from 25% to 90% of the cost of your eligible products and services.

INCOME <small>Measured by % of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program</small>	CATEGORY 1		CATEGORY 2	
	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%	60%	70%	60%	70%
50% to 74%	80%	80%	80%	80%
75% to 100%	90%	90%	85%	85%



EducationSuperHighway is the leading non-profit focused on upgrading the Internet access in every public school classroom in America. We believe that digital learning has the potential to provide all students with equal access to educational opportunity and that every school requires high-speed broadband to make that opportunity a reality.

We catalyze federal and state action on K-12 broadband initiatives and are currently working with governors in 20 states covering 20 million students. We work directly with school districts to accelerate network upgrades by connecting them to competitive service provider options in their areas. As a non-profit, our tools and services are offered free of charge.

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