

E-RATE ASSISTANCE FOR SCHOOLS

The E-Rate (short for "education rate") is a nationwide program that offers public and religious/independent schools and libraries the opportunity to receive substantial discounts on a wide range of advanced telecommunications services.

E-Rate discounts can be used for both existing school services, such as basic telephone, fax lines, cell phones, etc. and for new projects designed to bring a school's technology infrastructure into the 21st century. The E-rate funds a broad range of Internet and telecommunications services, including Internet access, distance learning and videoconferencing service, high speed data connections, phone service, and some internal wiring and network equipment.

Access a step by step guide to securing e-rate discounts. the guide is being made available through our sister organization in California, the California Association of Private School Organizations (CAPSO).

Step by step guide: <http://www.capsso.org/resources/erate.html>

Key Provisions of the E-Rate Program:

- * All public and private nonprofit k-12 schools with endowments less than \$50 million and public libraries are eligible for discounts.
- * Discounts will apply to all commercially available telecom services, including Internet access, and internal connections, including wireless, wired, and cable.
- * Discounts range from 20% to 90%, with a higher discount for rural institutions and schools serving low-income families.
- * Discount rate will be based on the number of children eligible for the federal school lunch program.
- * Discounts also apply to equipment necessary to transport information within a school or library, including routers, hubs, network file servers and LANs.
- * Discounts do not apply to computers (except for network file servers), other hardware, software, fax machines, modems, teacher training, and asbestos removal.
- * Schools apply for discounts by completing an application and filing it with the Schools and Libraries basis.
- * Schools will need technology plans which must be approved before the form seeking payment of the discount to providers may be filed.

* Funding is provided through the National Exchange Carrier Association's Universal Service Fund, which reimburses providers the difference between the lowest corresponding price and the discount price.

* WCRIS has been designated as an alternative resource for approval of private school technology plans.

Information about applying for the program, including forms, deadlines, and eligibility information, is available from the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) website at <http://www.sl.universalservice.org/>

Frequently asked questions regarding eligibility and products/services:
<http://www.sl.universalservice.org/reference/EPSSFAQ.asp>

The Department of Public Instructions E-rate home page:
<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dlcl/pld/erate.html>