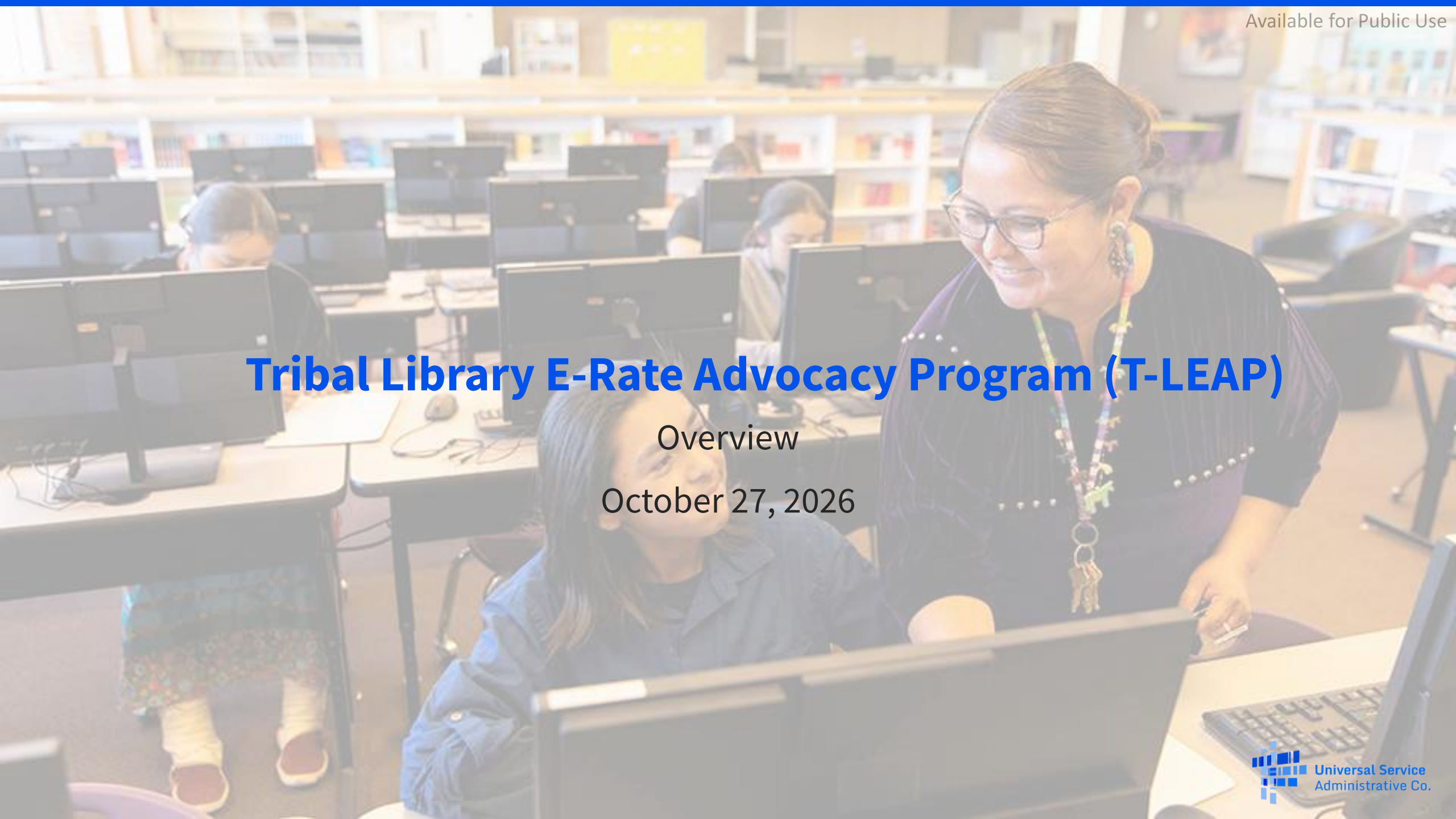
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Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program (T-LEAP)

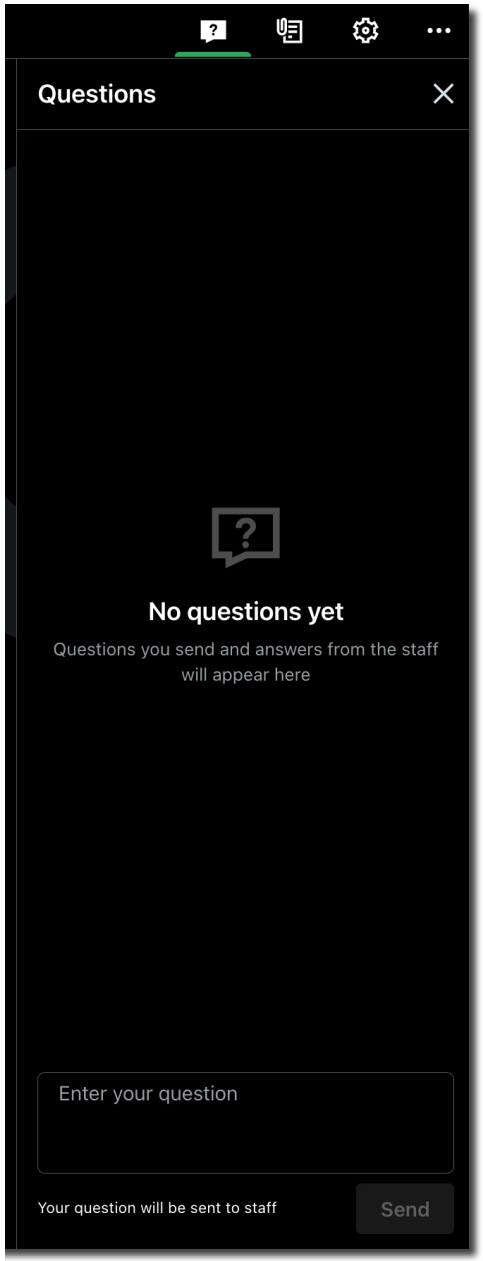
Overview

October 27, 2026

Universal Service Administrative Co.

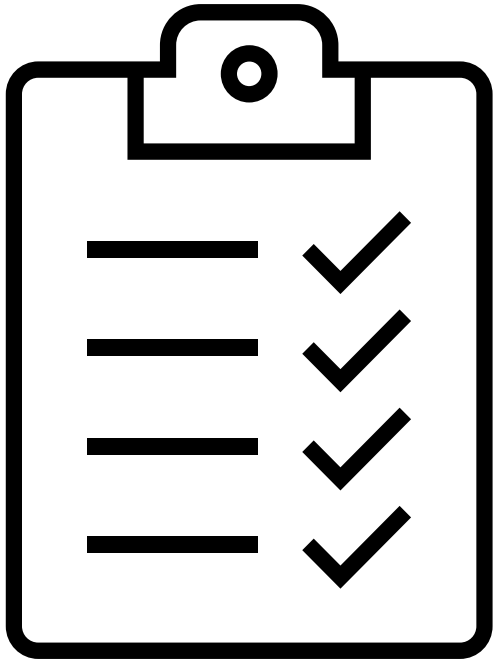
Housekeeping

- Audio is available through your computer's speakers
- Toggle Closed Captioning on or off using the GoToWebinar control panel
- The audience will remain on mute
- **Enter questions at any time using the "Questions" box**
- If your audio or slides freeze, restart the webinar
- A copy of today's presentation is available in the handouts section of the GoToWebinar control panel
- The webinar recording and slides will be posted to usac.org after today's session



Agenda

- Introductions & Welcome
- What is E-Rate?
- Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program (T-LEAP)
- Resources and Webinars



Introductions and Welcome

Meet Our Team



Cedric Watkins

Tribal Library Advocate and Analyst | E-Rate

Communicates the E-Rate program's objectives and policies with stakeholders.

Cedric.Watkins@usac.org



Gem Shandiin Labarta

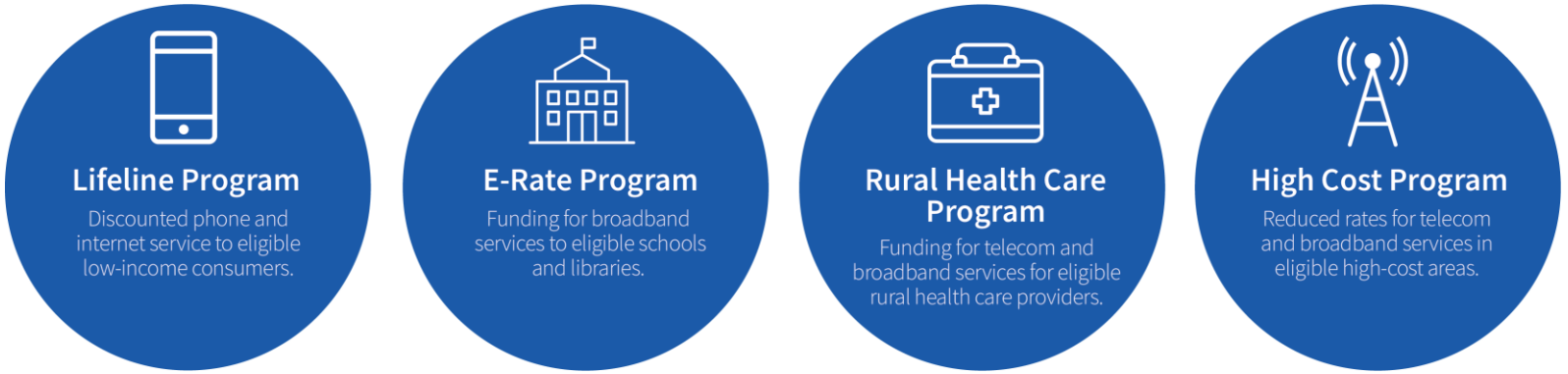
Tribal Liaison | Shared Services

Provides clear, accurate, real-time support to Tribal stakeholders.

Gem.labarta@usac.org

Welcome!

- Who are we?
  - We are the **Universal Service Administrative Company** (USAC)—an independent, not-for-profit organization designated by the FCC.
  - We are responsible for administering the **Universal Service Fund** (USF) and its four programs.
  - The USF ensures that all people in the United States have access to quality and affordable connectivity services.



Welcome!

- Who are you?
  - Where are you all located?
  - What Tribe are you affiliated with?
  - What type of library are you?
- Have you heard of E-Rate or the T-LEAP program?
  - Any questions about either program?

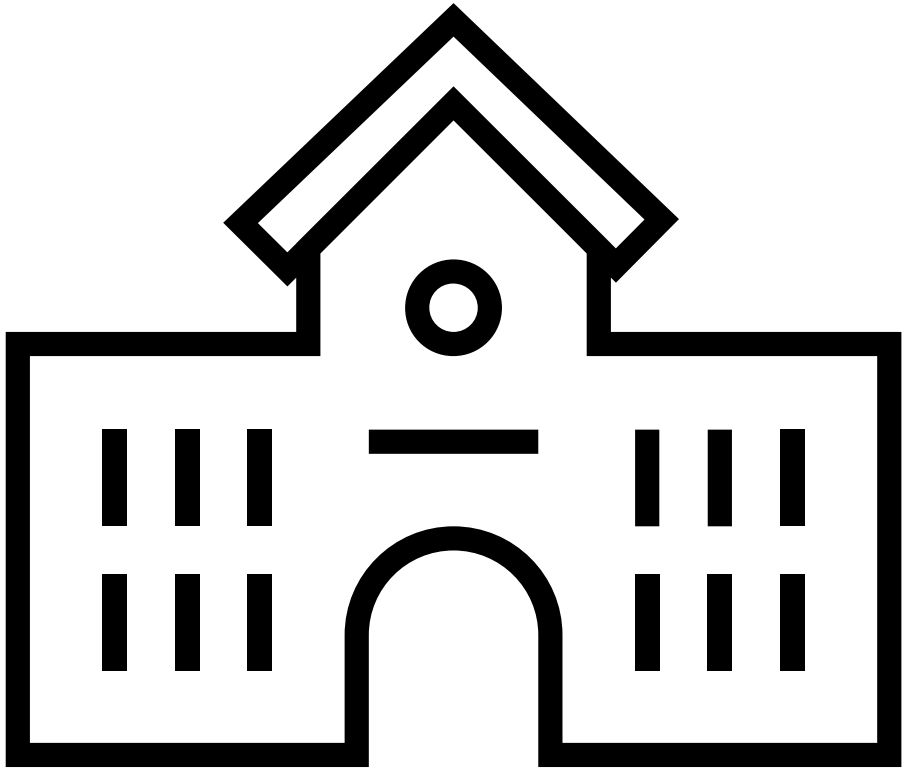
What Is E-Rate?

Glossary

Acronym	Definition
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
TCU	Tribal College and University
T-LEAP	Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program
TLA	Tribal Library Advocate
FY	Funding Year
EPC	E-Rate Productivity Center

What is E-Rate?

E-Rate provides support to schools and libraries to obtain affordable, high-speed broadband services and internal connections.



Why Participate in E-Rate?

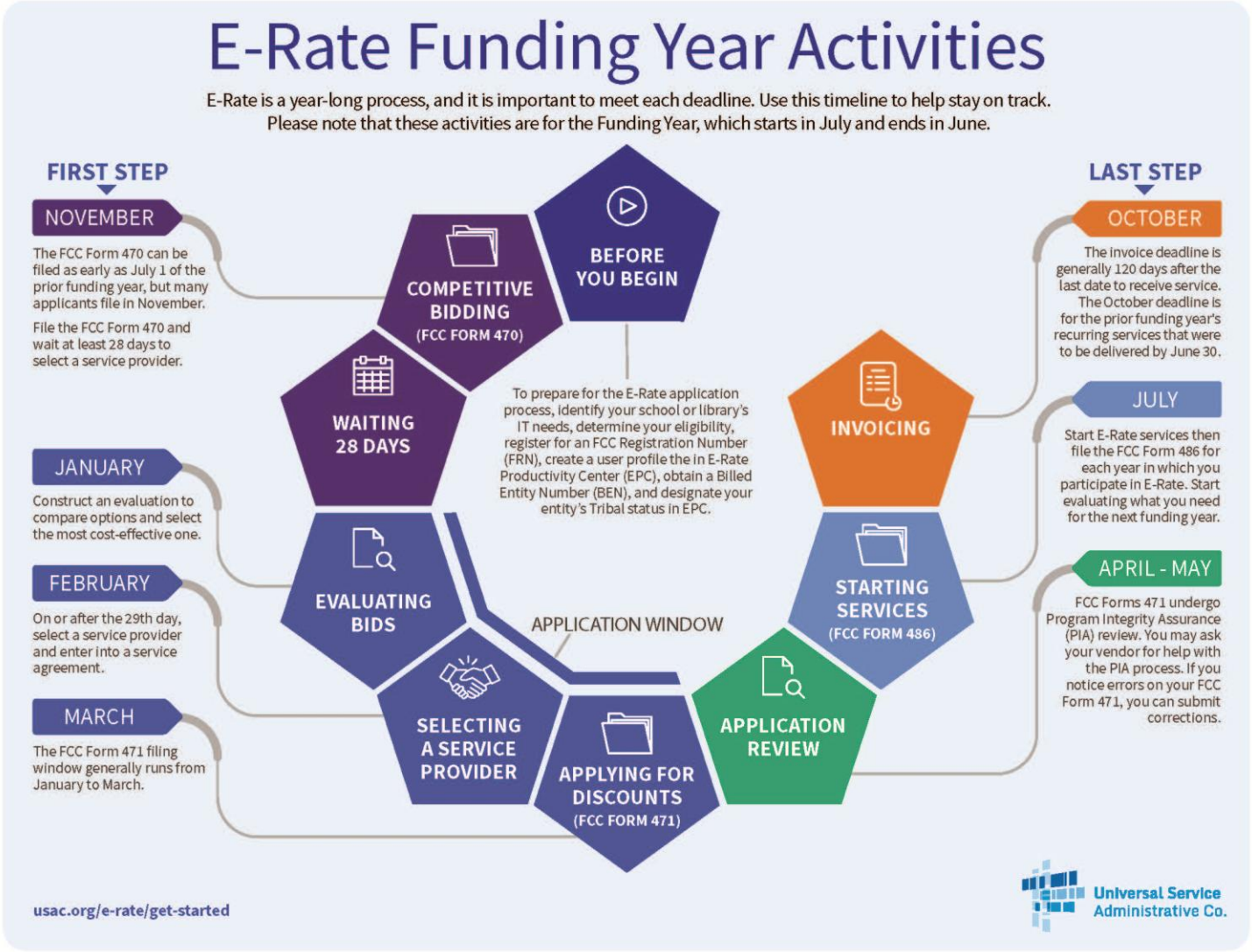
- E-Rate provides discounts of up to **90 percent** to eligible entities for eligible internet access, data transmission services, and internal connections.
  - These discounts result in a reduction in the costs of the equipment and services to the schools or libraries requesting funding through the E-Rate program.

E-Rate Eligibility and Services

- **Eligible Applicants**
  - Public and private K-12 schools, libraries, and groups of schools and libraries (e.g., consortia, school districts, library systems), as well as Tribal schools, Tribal libraries, and Tribal college and university (TCU) libraries that also service as a public library.
- **Eligible Services**
  - Schools and libraries are eligible for discounts between 20 and 90 percent of the costs of eligible equipment and services. The applicant pays the remaining share (e.g., a 90 percent applicant pays $100 on a $1,000 request).
    - Discount varies based on the school or library's level of poverty, urban/rural status, and the type of services.
  - Please visit the Eligible Services List page to learn more about eligible equipment and/or services.

E-Rate Program Cycle

Funding Year Activities



Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program (T-LEAP)

T-LEAP Video

What is T-LEAP?



Questions?

Eligibility for Tribal Entities

- In 2022, the FCC amended its E-Rate rules to include Tribal libraries in its definition of library and clarify that Tribal libraries are eligible for support.
- In 2023, the FCC further amended its E-Rate rules to make Tribal College or University (TCU) libraries eligible for support.
- A library may be designated as a Tribal library by a Tribal Government (e.g., pursuant to a Tribal Resolution).
- A Tribal library may also work with the state library administrative agency where it is located.
- Tribal libraries should demonstrate three characteristics commonly associated with Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grants to Native American libraries:
  - Regularly scheduled hours
  - Staff
  - Materials available for library users

Tribal Entity Definition

- The definition was updated for FY2024 in the FCC 23-56 and the Federal Register:
  - An entity is “Tribal” for purposes of E-Rate funding if it is a **school** operated by or receiving funding from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), or
  - If it is a **school or library** operated by any Tribe, Band, Nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska native village, regional corporation, or village corporation (as defined in, or established pursuant to, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.)) that is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

Improving E-Rate for Tribal Applicants

- The Report and Order adopted in 2023 amended program rules to enhance Tribal applicants' access to the E-Rate program to encourage wider program participation.
  - Granted E-Rate eligibility to Tribal higher education libraries also serving as the local public library
  - Created a new competitive bidding exemption for libraries seeking C2 services and equipment that costs $3,600 or less per year, per library
  - Increased the maximum C2 discount rate from 85 percent to 90 percent and increased the C2 funding floor for Tribal libraries
  - Provided guidance on cost allocation issues experienced by applicants
  - Adopted a formal definition of "Tribal" for the E-Rate program
  - Expanded USAC Board of Directors to add a Tribal community representative
  - Increased USAC outreach and training on E-Rate and the USF programs for Tribal applicants
  - Sought comments on simplification of other program rules for all E-Rate applicants

Tribal Library E-Rate Advocacy Program (T-LEAP)

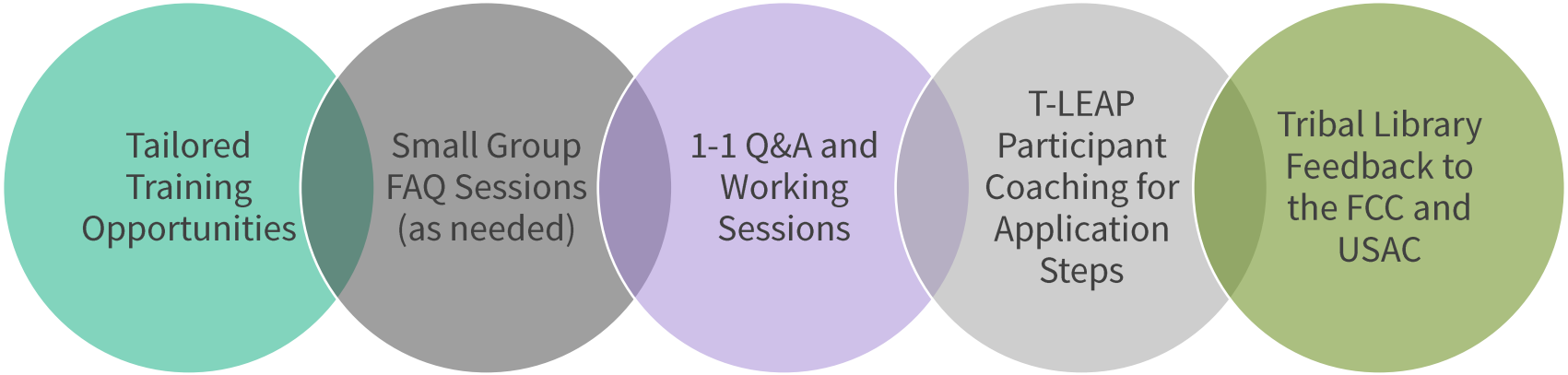
- One-on-one hands-on assistance in all aspects of preparing, applying, and receiving E-Rate support during the upcoming funding year, including Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requirements.
- Trainings designed to help you apply for funding, including:
  - E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) Administrative Window.
  - Walkthroughs of the Competitive Bidding and Application Processes, including timelines and information needed to complete competitive bidding and the application.
- T-LEAP Applications accepted year-round with three focused trainings yearly.

T-LEAP Plan

- Partner with a Tribal Library Advocate (TLA) who will meet with your team, provide resources, and walk you through E-Rate processes.
- Sessions will be led by your TLA and planned according to your schedules and the funding cycle.
  - The number of sessions may depend on your needs, but you can expect both individual and group sessions each month.
- Receive resources and guidance to complete tasks like assessing your library's IT needs, determining your library's discount rate, and completing any other necessary registrations.
- Provide feedback so that we can continue to simplify and enhance the E-Rate experience for all Tribal school and library participants.

T-LEAP Plan

- You can expect a cohort-based learning/support model.
  - A mix of one-on-one assistance combined with group sessions to collaborate with fellow Tribal library participants.



T-LEAP – Tips for Success

- The beginning of T-LEAP is the busiest – identifying IT needs, completing the competitive bidding process, and completing the application process.
- Most E-Rate applicants must perform a minimum 28-day competitive bidding process before completing the application process.
- Tribal libraries that have support and participation from Tribal leadership, library staff, and IT staff are more likely to complete the E-Rate funding process.
- USAC offers an E-Rate Training series. We recommend joining these sessions to learn more about the program.

Questions?

Resources

Resources

- For program information, visit the E-Rate webpage.
- T-LEAP Applications accepted year-round.
- For webinars, videos, and Tribal FAQs, visit the Learn page.
- Subscribe to the Tribal and E-Rate Newsletters.
- For general USAC Tribal information, visit the Tribal Nations webpage.
- Email the Tribal Liaison at TribalLiaison@usac.org.

E-Rate Fall Training Series Webinars

- E-Rate Recorded Webinars and Webinar Slides
  - E-Rate Program Overview
  - Administrative Window
  - Category Two Budgets
  - Pre-Commitment Process
  - Invoicing
  - Post-Commitment Process
- Upcoming E-Rate Webinars
  - Eligible Services 101, **Tuesday, November 3, at 2 p.m. ET** – Register.
  - Tribal Teleconference with E-Rate, **Tuesday, November 10, at 4 p.m. ET** – Register.

Resources – Before You Begin

- Tips for New Tribal Applicants (PDF)
- Registering for a Billed Entity Number (BEN) Checklist for New Tribal Library E-Rate Applicants (PDF)
- Frequently Used Terms (PDF)
- Towards Gigabit Libraries Toolkit (PDF)

About the Toward Gigabit Libraries Toolkit

TOWARD GIGABIT LIBRARIES

The **Toward Gigabit Libraries (TGL) Toolkit and Broadband Improvement Plan** is a powerful, FREE tool to help libraries learn about and improve their current broadband infrastructure and internal information technology (IT) environment.

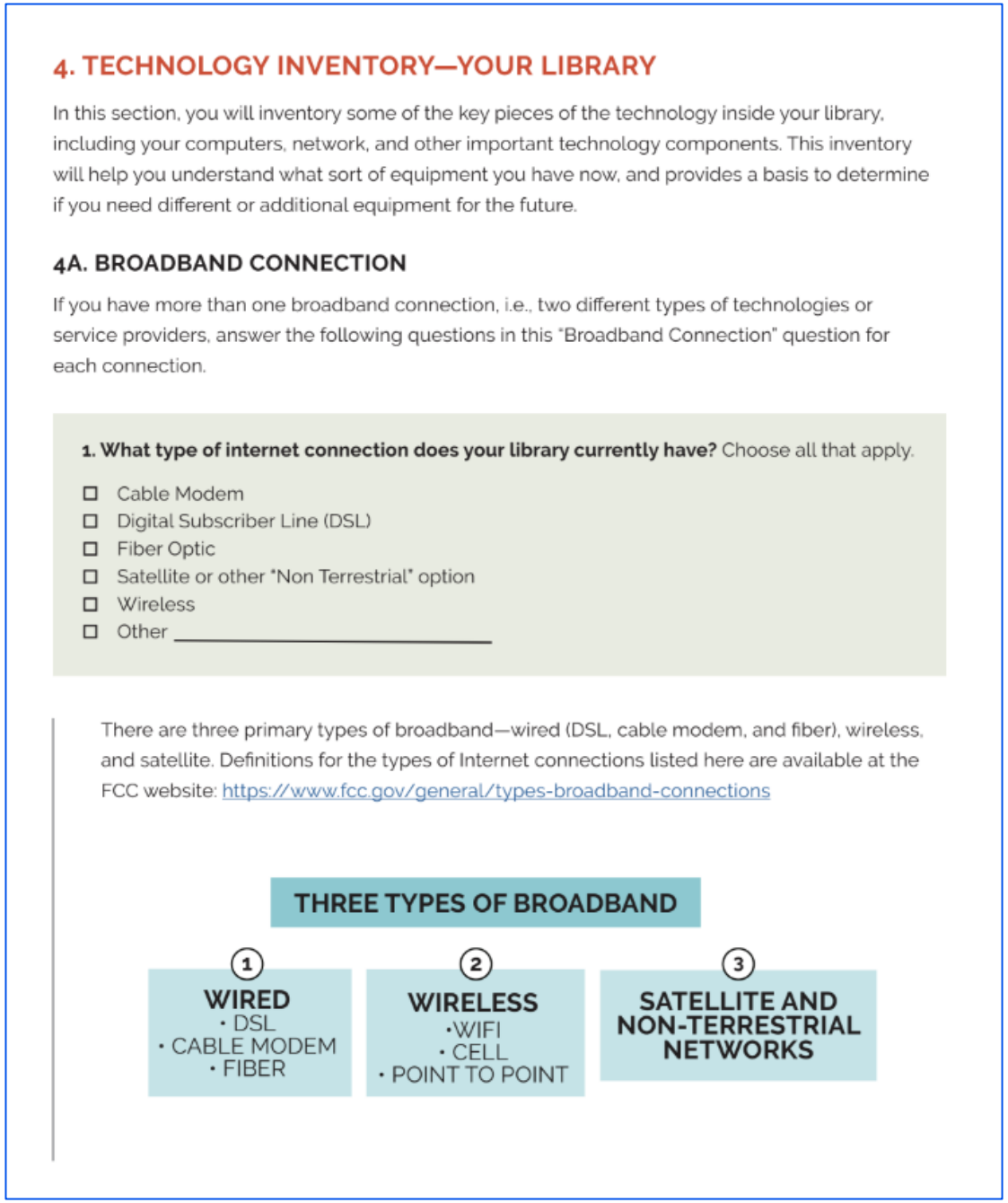
Using the TGL Toolkit and Broadband Improvement Plan, librarians will be better equipped to improve their broadband services and become stronger advocates for their libraries' broadband infrastructure needs.

https://internet2.edu/tgl

Available for Public Use

Technology Inventory

- In this section, you will inventory some of the key pieces of the technology inside your library, including your network, computers, and other important technology components.
- This inventory will help you understand what sort of equipment you have now and determine if you need different or additional equipment for the future.
- For example:
  - Broadband connection
  - Network devices
  - Wired network and power
  - Wireless network and power
  - Computer and end user devices



4. TECHNOLOGY INVENTORY—YOUR LIBRARY

In this section, you will inventory some of the key pieces of the technology inside your library, including your computers, network, and other important technology components. This inventory will help you understand what sort of equipment you have now, and provides a basis to determine if you need different or additional equipment for the future.

4A. BROADBAND CONNECTION

If you have more than one broadband connection, i.e., two different types of technologies or service providers, answer the following questions in this "Broadband Connection" question for each connection.

1. What type of internet connection does your library currently have? Choose all that apply.

- ☐ Cable Modem
- ☐ Digital Subscriber Line (DSL)
- ☐ Fiber Optic
- ☐ Satellite or other "Non Terrestrial" option
- ☐ Wireless
- ☐ Other _____

There are three primary types of broadband—wired (DSL, cable modem, and fiber), wireless, and satellite. Definitions for the types of Internet connections listed here are available at the FCC website: https://www.fcc.gov/general/types-broadband-connections

THREE TYPES OF BROADBAND

1. **WIRED**
   - DSL
   - CABLE MODEM
   - FIBER
2. **WIRELESS**
   - WIFI
   - CELL
   - POINT TO POINT
3. **SATELLITE AND NON-TERRESTRIAL NETWORKS**

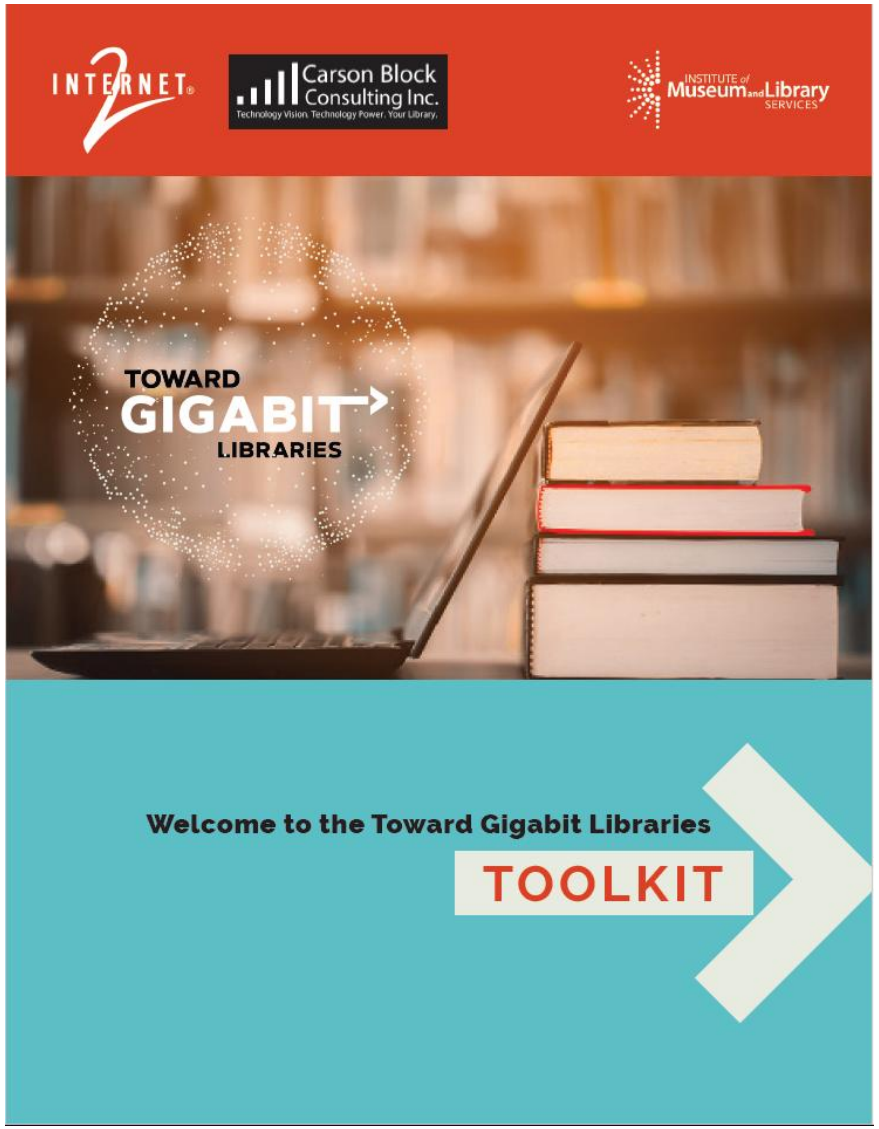
Download the Toward Gigabit Libraries Toolkit

Watch this fun, short video for a great overview of the TGL toolkit: https://youtu.be/PXWv3-HYm-I

Download the latest version of the Toward Gigabit Libraries Toolkit:

https://internet2.edu/tgl

QR code to download toolkit



E-Rate Customer Service Center (CSC)



Call us at (888) 203-8100

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET



Create a customer service case

1. Log in to the **E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC)**
2. Select the **Contact Us** link from the upper right menu on the landing page.

Thank You!

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