E-Rate Tribal Libraries Pilot Program

Information Session
Agenda

• Introductions
• E-Rate Tribal Libraries Pilot Program Announcement
• E-Rate Program Overview
• What to Expect in the Pilot Program
• Questions and Answers
Introductions
Tell Us About Yourself

Using the question feature in the webinar panel on the right hand side of your screen, please share your:

- Name
- Tribal affiliation
- Your role (Tribal leadership, Tribal IT, Tribal library staff, other)
- Has your Tribal community applied for E-Rate previously?
Introductions

• Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
• Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)
E-Rate Tribal Libraries Pilot Program
E-Rate Tribal Libraries Pilot Program

The FCC and USAC just announced a new Tribal Library Pilot Program that will provide one-on-one assistance to Tribal libraries through all phases of the E-Rate application and reimbursement processes during the upcoming 2023 funding year.
Pilot Program: How Can We Be A Resource?

- Recognizing the vital role Tribal libraries play in providing Internet access to members of their communities, the FCC & USAC are excited to work closely with Tribal libraries to better understand their connectivity needs & how E-Rate can help.

- To accomplish this, we hope to learn more about each individual Tribal library:
  - What population does the library serve?
  - What role does the library play in its community?
  - What types of challenges does the library encounter? Do you have IT support?
  - What are the library’s priorities?

- We also seek to gain an understanding about the Tribal library applicant experience and then use the information to help streamline the E-Rate program and to increase participation, particularly for new Tribal applicants.
Pilot Program: How E-Rate funding can help you

- E-Rate funding can be used to meet the unique IT needs of your library and improve your Tribal Community’s access to Internet and Wi-Fi services. For example,
  - Has it been over 3 to 5 years since your library’s IT equipment and cabling has been installed? Is your IT equipment and cabling older than this? It can be replaced and upgraded with E-Rate funding! Up to 85% of the costs can be covered and the minimum amount for your library is up to $25,000 every five years!
  - Do you need help with the costs of your monthly Internet service? Up to 90% of these costs can be paid using E-Rate funding.
  - Are there areas in your library where you do not have access to Wi-Fi services? You can add or upgrade existing Wi-Fi equipment to reach these areas!
Who We Are: The Universal Service Administrative Company

The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as the permanent administrator of the USF and its four programs.

- **The Universal Service Fund (USF):** Exists to ensure that all people in the United States, including Tribal lands, have access to quality, affordable connectivity service.
E-Rate Program Overview
Tribal Libraries are Eligible for E-Rate Funding

• In January 2022, the FCC updated the definition of a library, and clarified that tribal libraries are eligible for support through the E-Rate program.
  • Tribal libraries must be able to demonstrate that they have three basic characteristics of a library, including:
    ▪ Regularly scheduled hours;
    ▪ Staff; and
    ▪ Materials for library users.
  • Tribal government entities can designate a library as a Tribal library (for example, through a Tribal Resolution). Tribal libraries may also be able to work with the state library administrative agency where they are located.
  • Tribal college libraries are currently ineligible for E-Rate support, but Tribal libraries located in shared buildings/space with separate budgets from a Tribal college library or a school are eligible.
How Can E-Rate Funding Help Tribal Libraries?

• The E-Rate program provides discounts up to 90% of the costs to libraries and groups of libraries (e.g., consortia, systems) for eligible Internet access and data transmission services, internal connections (e.g., Wi-Fi equipment, wireless access points, routers, switches, cabling), and basic maintenance services.

• This funding reduces the costs for these services and equipment for libraries that receive E-Rate funding.

• For example:
  • E-Rate can pay up to 90% of the library’s costs for monthly Internet service from a local Internet provider.
  • E-Rate can pay up to 85% of the costs to install or update a Wi-Fi network to help Tribal members connect their devices.
  • E-Rate can also pay for the construction to libraries without strong Internet connections.
Equipment and Services Eligible for E-Rate Funding
Eligible Equipment and Services: Category One (C1)

- Data Transmission and/or Internet Access Services
- No limit on the amount of funding that can be requested and received per each funding year.
- Includes services that bring broadband or Internet services to the eligible schools and/or libraries.
  - Eligible services are classified as:
    - Data Transmission and/or
    - Internet Access services
Examples: Category One (C1) Services

- Examples of **Category One (C1)** services include:
  - Leased lit fiber
  - Internet access service provided over fiber or copper
  - Commercially available Internet access service:
    - Tribal telecommunications provider Internet
    - Satellite Internet
  - The equipment needed to bring the Internet service to the library is also eligible as C1 services and is not subject to the Tribal library’s C2 budget.
Eligible Equipment and Services: Category 2 (C2)

• Internal Connections (e.g., routers, modems, switches, cabling, software licenses, etc.), Managed Internal Broadband Services, and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections

• A Tribal library has a “budget” or limit on how much funding they can request and receive for Category 2 equipment and services.

• A Tribal library’s “budget” is based on the square footage of the Tribal library space or will be $25,000, which is the minimum amount per Tribal library, for the five-year period.
Eligible Services: Category Two (C2)

• **Category Two (C2)** includes services or equipment necessary to provide Internet service throughout the library or classrooms of a school.

• **There are three service types:**
  
  • **Internal Connections (IC)** – Equipment needed to use the Internet service throughout a school or library. This includes, for example, routers, switches, cabling and wiring, software licenses needed for the equipment to work.

  • **Basic Maintenance of Eligible Broadband Internal Connections (BMIC)** – Covers the repair and upkeep of the eligible equipment needed to provide Internet service throughout the library or school.

  • **Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS)** – Services provided by a vendor related to the operation, management, and monitoring of the eligible equipment (owned or leased) necessary to provide the Internet service throughout the library or school.

• Laptops, computers, headsets, speakers, and other individual end-user equipment are **not** eligible for E-Rate funding.
Examples: Category Two (C2) Services

- Examples of Category Two (C2) services include:
  - **Internal Connections**
    - Upgraded cabling, routers, switches, modems, and Wi-Fi equipment, like wireless access points
  - **Basic maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC)**
    - The repair and upkeep of eligible network equipment (services to deploy bugs, fixes, patches, etc.)
    - Multi-year maintenance service agreements (for example updates to existing software)
    - Only maintenance services provided during the funding year are eligible (i.e., a three-year maintenance contract should be requested annually for one third of the price over three funding years).
  - **Managed internal broadband services (MIBS)**
    - Managed Wi-Fi agreement with a service provider.
How to Apply and Receive E-Rate Funding

Stages of the E-Rate Program
What to Expect from the Pilot Program
E-Rate Tribal Library Pilot Program Overview

- One-on-one assistance in all aspects of preparing, applying, and receiving E-Rate support during the upcoming funding year.
- Trainings designed to help you apply for funding, including:
  - How to use the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC), the online system for E-Rate.
  - Walk throughs of the competitive bidding and application processes, including timelines and information needed to complete competitive bidding and the application.
- Hands on support while completing the different E-Rate forms and processes needed to apply for and receive E-Rate funding.
E-Rate Tribal Library Pilot Program Eligibility

• The pilot program is open to Tribal libraries that are new to the E-Rate program or unsuccessfully tried to apply to the E-Rate program in the past.

• Participating Tribal libraries must meet eligibility requirements. Specifically, Tribal library pilot participants must be able to demonstrate that they have three basic characteristics of a library, including:
  • Regularly scheduled hours;
  • Staff; and
  • Materials for library users.
E-Rate Tribal Library Pilot Program 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.
E-Rate Tribal Library Pilot Program Plan

• Sessions will be led by E-Rate Tribal Library Advocates and scheduled according your schedules and the 2023 funding cycle.
  • The number of sessions may depend on your needs, but you can expect both individual and group sessions each month.

• You will receive resources and guidance to complete tasks like assessing your library’s IT technology needs, determining your library’s discount rate, and completing any other necessary registrations.

• You will also be asked to provide your feedback, so that we can continue to simplify and enhance the E-Rate experience for all Tribal school and library participants.
Participate in the E-Rate Tribal Library Pilot Program

- To apply for the Tribal Libraries Pilot program, complete a brief survey to tell us more about your library.
- Tribal Library Pilot Program applications are due by Friday, November 18, 2022.
- There will be a cap on the number of participants that can participate in this Pilot Program, so we encourage you to submit the survey early, if you are interested.
E-Rate Tribal Library Pilot Program Application Survey

- Library Name
- Address
- Library website (If applicable)
- Tribal affiliation
- Contact name
- Contact email
- Contact phone number
- Contact title/role
- If your Tribe has an IT contact, please share the contact person
E-Rate Tribal Library Pilot Program Application Survey (2)

• Do you have regularly scheduled hours, staff, and materials for library users?
  • Yes
  • No

• Have you been designated as a Tribal library, either by your Tribal government or the SLAA in your state? *
  • Yes
  • No
E-Rate Tribal Library Pilot Program Application Survey (3)

- Please provide a brief description of your Library (e.g., number of patrons, size of location, geographical setting)
- Please describe your library’s existing broadband and Wi-Fi resources, if you currently have Internet connectivity
- If known, what broadband services would you like to offer your library patrons?
- Is there anything else we should know about your library and its broadband needs?
- Is your library prepared to apply for E-Rate support for funding year 2023, the upcoming funding year?
- Have you previously participated in or applied for the E-Rate program?
- Do you have any questions about the pilot program?
- How did you hear about the E-Rate Tribal Library Pilot program?
Help With Assessing your IT Technology Needs

• One of the first things you will be asked to do is conduct a self-assessment of your library’s Internet and IT needs, if you do not already have one.

• To determine your library’s Internet and technology needs, the IMLS-funded Toward Gigabit Libraries Toolkit, a public, open-sourced resource was created to help you with this assessment of your library’s Internet and IT needs: http://www.internet2.edu/tgl. If you have questions about your assessment, we can help you to answer them as part of this pilot.

• Your IT contact person may also be able to help you with this assessment and what equipment needs to be replaced or upgraded. Please provide us with your IT contact person’s name and contact information. As part of this pilot, we can contact them to explain what E-Rate funding is and how it can help save costs for Tribal IT technology and services that are provided to your library.
Questions?
More Information
E-Rate Tribal Libraries Pilot Next Steps

• Apply for the pilot program using this brief survey.
• Tribal Library Pilot Program applications are due by Friday, November 18, 2022
USAC Tribal Contacts and Additional Information

- Contact TribalTraining@usac.org for questions about this pilot program.
- The USAC Tribal Liaison can also help answer your questions and provide additional help. You can contact USAC’s Tribal Liaison at TribalLiaison@usac.org.
- You can also call the Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET for help about E-Rate and the pilot program.
- You can visit: www.fcc.gov/tribal-libraries to learn more about E-Rate.
- If you decide to participate, you will also have additional support from your E-Rate Tribal Library Advocates.
Thank You!