



PUBLIC LIBRARY

In the Matter of: Wireline Competition Bureau Seeking Comments on E-rate Category Two) WC Docket No. 13-184

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the impact of having access to secure and sufficient funding for our library WiFi and internal connections. Prior to the E-rate Modernization in 2014, virtually no libraries received funds for what was then Priority 2 services. Unless we were at a 90% discount rate, we could assume there would be no funding left after all requests for internet access were funded. And although we have pockets of high need areas in our community, we like so many other libraries, according to USAC data, are eligible for a 70% discount or less. And we almost stopped bothering to apply for WiFi funding. Some states have reported that none of their libraries have received WiFi funds since the beginning of the E-rate program.

In communities across the country, people turn to the library to use our WiFi on their tablets, laptops, and other devices. Library users are downloading job applications, applying for financial aid, seeking health information, and communicating with family -all dependent on a strong WiFi signal. Increasingly, libraries also provide services that depend on WiFi, like coding clubs for K12 youth. Libraries like mine know WiFi throughout the library is not a "nice to have" - it's a core community service, and one that our patrons have come to expect and rely upon. It is even a core tenet to our city's economic development plan, as we are a town heavily dependent on the tourism industry and tourists for our economic livelihood. The library is a main stop for many of the town visitors.

With the commitment of the FCC to ensure a library budget of \$2.30 (\$5.00 for a selected category of larger urban and suburban libraries) per square foot, libraries can finally upgrade outdated equipment or plan for new construction. They have confidence that desperately needed support will be there.

Please maintain secure funding through the full five year budget period as adopted during the 2014 Modernization. Our communities depend on that funding.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Pruett
Library Director