

In the Matter of:

Wireline Competition Bureau Seeking Comments on E-rate Category Two- WC Docket No. 13-184

We are pleased to be able to provide input on the impact of having access to secure and sufficient funding for our library WiFi and internal connections. Before the E-rate Modernization in 2014, virtually no libraries received funds for 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. USAC data shows that most libraries are eligible for a 70% discount or less and according to the American Library Association, many libraries 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 everywhere know WiFi throughout the library is not a "nice to have" - it's a core community service.

In our community alone, we are facing significant budget cuts due to the fact that our largest employer is closing its door at the end of 2017. We have also witnessed this in July of this year from our local hospital closing its doors as well. The lives that are affected from these industries shutting down are enormous. We are seeing an increase in those filing for unemployment and searching for jobs online now on a daily basis. Without viable WiFi signal which is funded through E-rate, we would not be able to afford the internet speeds we currently have in place. It is imperative that we continue to receive the E-rate funds as before so that we can continue to offer excellent service to our patrons.

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(\$5.00 for a selected category of larger urban and suburban libraries) per square foot, libraries can finally upgrade outdated equipment or plan for new construction.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 truly depend on this funding. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.