



Bath County Memorial Library

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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 Wi Fi 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 Wi Fi funding. Some states have reported that none of their libraries have received Wi Fi funds since the beginning of the E-rate program.

In communities across the country, people turn to the library to use our Wi Fi 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 Wi Fi signal. Increasingly, libraries also provide services that depend on Wi Fi, like coding clubs for K12 youth. Libraries everywhere know Wi Fi throughout the library is not a "nice to have" - it's a core community service.

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(\$5.00 for a selected category of larger urban and suburban libraries) per square foot, libraries can finally upgrade outdated equipment or plan for new construction.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.

Our community has benefitted from the increased spending on technology infrastructure by allowing our connection speeds to be stable and fast. The library is the only public facility for dozens of miles in any direction to have access to free service.

Thank you,

Michael J. Richter, MLIS
Director

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