

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.

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(\$5.00 for a selected category of larger urban and suburban libraries) per square foot, libraries can finally upgrade outdated equipment or plan for new construction.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

Due to this funding, the three branches in our library system were able to receive updated WiFi access points that can accommodate the faster speeds for which we have applied. We now have a firewall and WiFi system that can be monitored and maintained remotely which saves us time and travel expenses.

The new equipment means that our patrons can connect on a wider variety of devices without fear of their connection dropping. This is especially important for those patrons who use WiFi to improve call quality and for those who cannot afford a data plan. Every day, we have hundreds of patrons access our internet services through WiFi and hardwired connections as they complete homework, take practice tests, learn how to use computers, learn how to code, apply for jobs, apply for government programs and financial aid, connect with their families and friends via social media, fill out paperwork, and so much more. Our connectivity would not be possible without the Category 2/Priority 2 funding provided through E-rate.

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