



# E-Rate

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## What is E-Rate?

Created by the U.S. Telecommunications Act of 1996, E-Rate helps ensure that K-12 schools and libraries, particularly those in low-income or rural areas, have affordable access to telecommunications and Internet service.

The program provides annual subsidies or “discounts” between 20% and 90% on eligible services and technology equipment.

**Example:** If a school district qualifies for a 90% discount, the E-Rate program pays for 90% of the cost, while the district would pay the remaining 10%.

## How is E-Rate Calculated?

The discounted rates are determined by the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunches through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Public K-12 schools and districts and most nonprofit schools are eligible for E-Rate funding.

## How does a school or library apply?

([Source: USAC](#)) The Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program provides discounts on eligible data transmission services and Internet access, voice services, internal connections and managed internal broadband services and equipment for eligible schools and libraries.

Here is a process overview for applicants. These steps will take you through the Schools and Libraries Program process and provide you with everything you need to know along the way.

## What is the source of E-Rate funding?

([Source: AASA](#)) The dollars come from the FCC, which collects the money through an assessment of telecommunication providers known as the Universal Services Fund. The 1997 Telecommunications Act reauthorization expanded the already-existing USF model (which ensured affordable access to telephone services to residents across the country) to support public schools and libraries.

What are the E-Rate discounts for schools and libraries?

([Source: AASA](#))

Free/Reduced Lunch Elig.	Urban Discount	Rural Discount
Less than 1%	20%	25%
1% to 19%	40%	50%
20% to 34%	50%	60%
35% to 49%	60%	70%
50% to 74%	80%	80%
75% to 100%	90%	90%