

E-Rate- An Introduction to the Application Process

August 2010

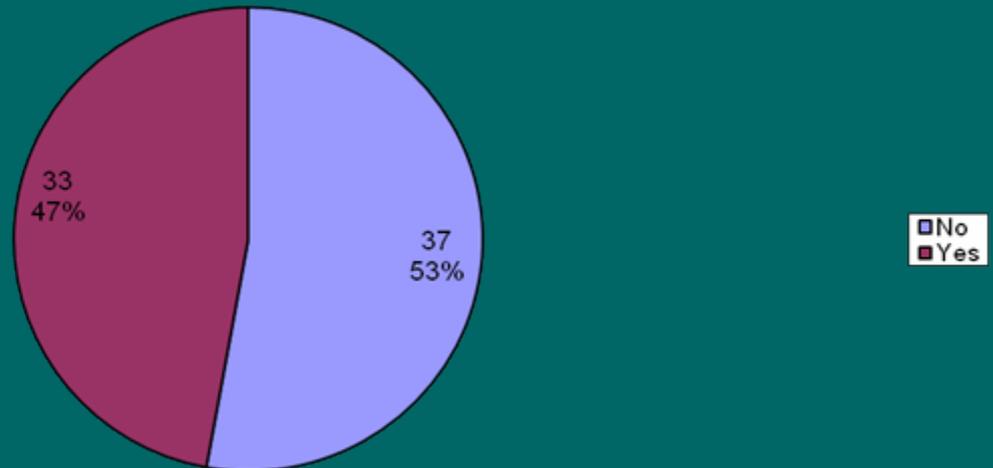


Information sources

- [NYS Library](#)
- [E-Rate Central](#)
- [USAC](#)

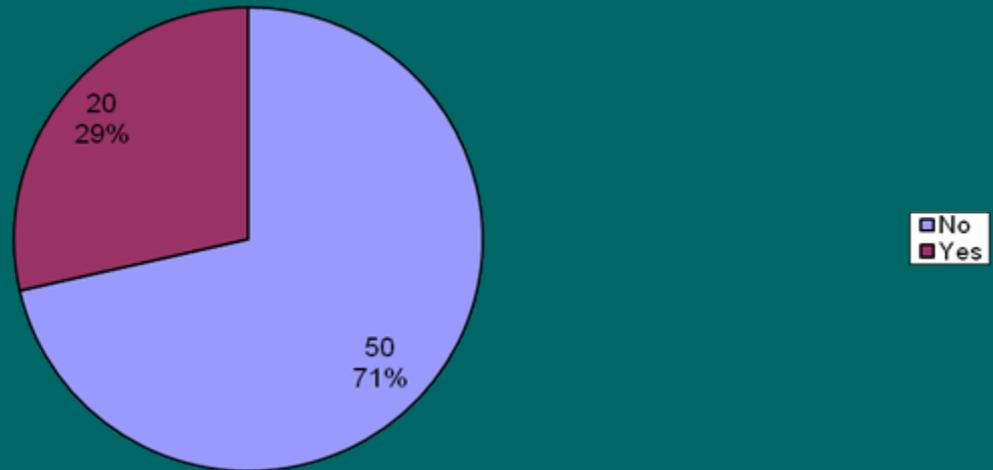
E-Rate Applications 2010

E-Rate Discount through Library System



E-Rate Applications 2010

Libraries receiving Individual E-Rate Discounts



E-Rate applications can be prepared for

- Telecommunications Services
- Internet Access
- Internal Connections
- Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections

Telecommunications Services

- Sometimes referred to as POTS – Plain Old Telephone Services- this is the most simple application in the E-Rate program
- ***A TECHNOLOGY PLAN is NOT necessary for a POTS-only application***

The remaining Services and Products

- **Require a Technology Plan**

While the application process can be somewhat time-consuming and tedious, the money realized from this can be significant

FIRST....

- ...you must have an approved technology plan.
 - This should cover at least one, but no more than three *funding years*
 - The plan should set out how IT and telecomm infrastructure will be used to achieve library service improvements.

The technology plan

- Plans MUST contain five elements:
 1. Goals and realistic strategy for using telecommunications and information technology
 2. A professional development strategy to ensure that staff know how to use these new technologies to improve library services;
 3. An assessment of telecommunication services, hardware, software, and other services needed

The technology plan, cont'd

4. Budget resources: a sufficient budget to acquire and support the non-discounted elements of the plan i.e. the hardware, software, professional development and other services that will be needed to implement the strategy
5. Ongoing evaluation process that enables the library to monitor progress toward the specified goals and make mid-course corrections in response to new developments and opportunities and they arise.

Technology plan, cont'd

- A technology plan covering the period for which you are requesting services must be written- including all five elements and covering the next funding year– **before the 470 Form is filed.**
- The plan must be **approved** by your library system before a Form 486 can be filed.
- Applicants are now required to formally certify on Form 486 that the technology plans on which they based their purchases were approved before they began to receive service.

In addition to being necessary for E-Rate, it is just good policy to have a technology plan in place!

Some detailed info about the plan

- **Element 1: The plan must establish clear goals and a realistic strategy for using telecommunications and information technology to improve education or library services.**
 - What goals have you identified in your library service or school improvement plan?
 - What accompanying strategies have already been identified to reach those goals?
 - What specific telecommunications and information technologies (such as access to the Internet, access to remote databases, distance learning, etc.) are useful in helping you reach those goals?
 - What are the specific resources (e.g., trainers, selected curricular software, Internet access, links to subscribed databases, etc.) that you plan to help reach your goals for improved teaching and learning or improved library service?

Detailed plan info.- cont'd

- **Element 2: The plan must have a professional development strategy to ensure that staff understands how to use these new technologies to improve education or library services.**
- - What are the specific resources and strategies that you plan to implement to ensure that your staff is ready to use and maintain the telecommunications and information technologies?
 - Who will be in charge of coordinating the professional development activities?
 - Are there in-service slots set aside for technology-related professional development?
 - Will the professional development be required for all that use it, or is it optional? If optional, what incentives exist to encourage librarians to pick up these new skills?
 - What models of professional development would work in your organization to train your staff?

Detailed plan info, cont'd

- Element 2 (this is a big one!) cont'd
 - Do you have the resources in house to train these staff members or do they need to go to outside courses, or a combination of the two?
 - What financial and time resources exist to keep the staff up to date in learning about new technologies?
 - What professional development opportunities are available from outside sources (such as service providers, courses at institutions of higher education, conferences, courses delivered via distance learning or over the Internet; courses sponsored by your state library agency)?

Detailed plan info, cont'd

- Element 2 (still!)
 - What professional development opportunities and resources exist for your professional staff to ensure that they can not only use the new technologies, but to use them to deliver improved library services?
 - What classes or seminars are available to your staff on an ongoing basis within your organization?
 - Can your staff meet with others who are already further along in implementing technology in another library?

Detailed plan info

- **Element 3: The plan must include an evaluation process that enables the library to monitor progress toward the specified goals and make mid-course corrections in response to new developments and opportunities as they arise.**
 - How frequently will you update the plan?
 - Who is responsible for updating the plan?
 - How will you determine if the technology plan was successful in meeting the goals of your institutional plans, i.e. your library service plan (e.g., interview/survey staff, patrons, other stakeholders; measuring progress made towards the benchmarks you set out in your goals; observations)?
 - What goals and objectives of the technology plan were you able to meet? To what extent?

Detailed plan info, cont'd

- Element 3, cont'd
 - Were there any unexpected outcomes or benefits to having the technology in place?
 - What goals and objectives of the technology plan did you not meet? Why? Are there ways to overcome these barriers?
 - What is the plan for meeting unmet goals and objectives?
 - Are there other needs that have emerged since you last wrote/revised your plan? If so, what are they?
 - Are there any goals and objectives that are no longer relevant to your situation and should be deleted from the plan?

IMPORTANT note

- The plan **MUST** include an attached budget for all years covered by the plan!



The process

- Create Technology plan. Submit for approval. Details regarding this and the procedure are on the NY State E-Rate website:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/univsvc/>

The process- cont'd

- Complete and post the 470 Form requesting services.
- Make sure you check the E-Rate central site for help !
- *Hint: In Block 2 #7 (services) select tariffed and contract services, multi-year contract AND voluntary extensions. You don't have to take these, but you want the flexibility.*

The process- cont'd

- Complete Form 471- Services Ordered and Certification Form- no sooner than 28 days after your form 470 has been submitted

The process- cont'd (still)

- Form 486 must be filed within 120 days of the issuance of a Funding Commitment Decision Letter or the Service Start Date, whichever is later
- Form 472 (BEAR) forms must generally be filed within 120 days of the last date of service

Some details about Form 470

- Applicants must file a new Form 470 each funding year for requests for tariffed or month-to-month services and for new contractual services. When the Form 470 is filed, USAC will make it available to interested service providers by posting it to the USAC website.
- A new Form 470 is **not required** if an applicant intends to seek discounts on services provided under a multi-year contract executed under a posted Form 470 in a prior funding year.

Form 470 details, cont'd

- The form **MUST NOT** be filled out by anyone who will be bidding to provide services named on the form.

Form 470 details, cont'd

- Applicants **must**:
 - Describe specific services or functions for support
 - Identify the correct category of services: telecommunications, Internet access, internal connections, or basic maintenance of internal connections
 - Identify recipients of services for support
 - Follow all applicable state and local procurement laws

Form 470 details, cont'd

- Applicants then must wait 28 days after the Form 470 is posted to the USAC website or after public availability of your Request for Proposals (RFP), whichever is later, before selecting a vendor or executing a contract

Note: If an RFP is used, the Form 470 must indicate such and the bidding periods must be compatible

Form 470 details, cont'd

- You may also use other solicitation methods, including RFPs (Requests for Proposals), in addition to Form 470

Next steps

- Applicants must select the most cost-effective provider of the desired products or services eligible for support, with price as the primary factor.

Selecting a provider

- **Waiting Period.** At the conclusion of the 28-day waiting period after the *Description of Services Requested and Certification Form* (Form 470) is posted on the USAC website, the applicant may select a vendor for tariffed or month-to-month services or execute a contract for new contractual services.
- **Bid Evaluation.** Applicants must construct an evaluation for consideration of bids received in response to the posting of the Form 470 that makes price the primary factor in the selection of a vendor.
- **Contract Guidance.** Applicants may also choose vendors from a State Master Contract, execute multi-year contracts pursuant to a Form 470, and enter into voluntary contract extensions, but certain additional contract requirements apply. In all cases, applicants must comply with state and local procurement laws.

Important Note

- **Document Retention.** Applicants must save all documentation pertaining to the competitive bidding process and vendor selection for five years past the last date to receive service. Applicants must certify and acknowledge on the Form 470 and the *Services Ordered and Certification Form* (Form 471) that they may be audited and that they must retain all records that can verify the accuracy of information provided.

Discounts

- If you apply for Schools and Libraries Program support for eligible services, you must calculate the discount percentage

Calculating discounts

- Applicants use the *Services Ordered and Certification Form (Form 471)* to calculate the discount and begin by listing the recipients of services for support. FCC rules include a discount matrix that takes into consideration poverty level and the urban or rural location of the participating entity.

Primary measure of discounts

- = the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunches under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Library branches or outlets must obtain and use the NSLP data for the public school district *in which they are located* to calculate the discount.

Urban vs. Rural

- Every school or library in the United States is located in either a rural or an urban area, based on Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) data.

Form 471

- May be filed online or on paper
- Must be certified by an authorized person to be considered complete
- Must be postmarked or submitted online prior to the close of the application filing window for the funding year to be considered as filed within the window

Miscellany

- **Form 471 Item 21 Attachment:** Services and products for which discounts are requested must be described on the [Item 21 Attachment](#). The Item 21 Attachment may be created and submitted online.

Miscellany - cont'd

- **Form 471 Item 21 Certification:** Applicants must certify that they have secured access to the resources necessary to pay for:
 - The non-discounted portion of the costs for requested eligible services within the funding year
 - The ineligible products and services necessary to make effective use of the eligible services requested

Provided you survive all that...

- USAC will issue a “Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL)” to both the applicant and service provider upon successful data entry of the Form 471 and certification.

Applicants should review the RAL and, if necessary, submit allowable corrections to USAC.

E-Rate Additional Information

- Websites that will help you A LOT
- **E-Rate Central:**
<http://www.e-ratecentral.com/>
- **USAC (Universal Service Administrative Company):** <http://www.usac.org/sl/>
- **ALA- (E-Rate Tools)**
<http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/telecom/erate/eratetools/index.cfm>

E-Rate *More* Additional Information

- Attend the Fall training offered by E-Rate Central and USAC. Schedules are posted on their websites
- Ask your Library System E-Rate expert for help

E-Rate Additional Suggestions:

- Subscribe to the E-Rate Central Weekly newsletter –
<http://www.e-ratecentral.com/subscribe.asp>
- Attend the NYLA (November 3-6, 2010)
E-Rate workshop- “E-Rate Myth Busters” –
Thursday, Nov 4 from 1:45 - 3:00PM