**What is E-Rate**

Christa Burns, [E-Rate: What’s new for 2016](http://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/e-rate-whats-new-for-2016.html)

E-rate is a federal program that provides discounts to schools and libraries on Telecommunications, Internet access, and Internal Connections costs in order to make these services more affordable.

E-rate is the commonly used name for the Universal Service Fund. The [Schools and Libraries Division (SLD)](http://www.usac.org/sl/) of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) administers the E-rate program for schools and libraries. USAC is a not-for-profit corporation overseen by the FCC.

**Who is eligible?**

**All public libraries** are eligible to apply for E-rate.

**How much of a discount can my library receive?**

Discounts range from **20% - 90%**. The amount is based on: 1) the percentage of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program in the school district in which the library is located, and 2) the urban or rural location of the library, based on U.S. Census data.

**What services are funded?**

* Telecommunications services - local, long distance, 800 number, and cell phone service
* Internet Access - Broadband, Fiber, Wi-Fi
* Internal Connections - wiring and network equipment
* Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections

**What is the future of funding for Telephone Services?**

The E-rate program is changing to focus support on improving Broadband Internet Access to schools and libraries. In part to accomplish this, Voice Services are gradually being phased out. This includes local, long distance, 800 number, and cellular voice phone service.

**Do I have to filter my library's computers to qualify for E-rate?**

Only if you are applying for discounts for Internet Access, Internal Connections, and/or Basic Maintenance. **If you only apply for discounts on Telecommunications, i.e. your basic phone service, you do not have to filter.**

**How do I apply?**

Start the process in the Fall by [filing online](http://www.usac.org/sl). See the [Timeline](http://www.webjunction.org/content/dam/WebJunction/Documents/webJunction/2015-10/handout-erate-timeline.docx) (doc) for the entire Application Process.

**I have more questions about E-rate. Who do I contact?**

Contact your state E-rate coordinator. A list of coordinators is available on ALA at <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/e-rate-state-coordinators>