

# Understand the E-Rate program to maximize your managed solutions

Navigate the application process and support innovation with E-Rate funding

Budget challenges represent a persistent reality for K-12 schools, driven in part by growing technology demands. The E-Rate program has played a vital role in helping eligible institutions fund telecommunications, internet access and other technology services. As the program has evolved, it has grown more complex, making the planning and execution of your application more critical than ever.



**67%**

of school districts across the U.S. are meeting the FCC's bandwidth goal of 1 Mbps per student.<sup>1</sup>

**23.5M**

students still lack adequate bandwidth to support digital learning.<sup>2</sup>



**99%**

The growth in the use of education technology within K-12 since 2020.<sup>3</sup>

## E-Rate categories: What they fund



### Utilize **Category 1** to get connected

This option helps facilitate broadband connectivity to eligible schools and libraries. Selecting Category 1 services can help attain data transmission services, internet access, DSL, broadband and fiber connections, among other services.



### Unlock the benefits of leasing with **Category 2**

Category 2 comprises broadband connectivity technology and managed services. These include internal connections for broadband connectivity, managed internal broadband services (MIBS) and basic maintenance of internal connections.

#### Did you know you can choose to have a network solution installed and fully managed by a service provider?

The benefits of leasing managed network solutions for K-12 education include:

- No large upfront capital investment.
- No time-consuming maintenance demands.
- Reduced burden on IT staff so the team can focus on higher-priority projects.
- Flexibility to scale network capacity as needs change.
- Up-to-date network and cybersecurity protection with automatic updates and refreshes.
- Effective and predictable budgeting thanks to fixed costs.



**95%**

of survey respondents view E-Rate funding as essential to their school's or library's internet connectivity goals.<sup>4</sup>

## Get the most out of your E-Rate application

Evaluate your goals, confirm your eligibility for the services you need and prepare your Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Form 470 at the Universal Service Administrative Company's application management portal: [E-Rate Productivity Center](#). And remember, funding for leasing and managed services falls under MIBS within Category 2.

### Review the steps below to secure the option for **Category 2 E-Rate-eligible managed services**:

- 1. The first screen of the online application asks for high-level details about your request.** If you plan to apply for both categories in the same application, you will first address Category 1 services.
- 2. Record your Category 2 requests.** These might include routers, cabling, switches and modems, as well as their repair and upkeep. Note, it can also include MIBS options.
- 3. Choose the options you are seeking bids for:**
  - Equipment for broadband connectivity.
  - Basic maintenance and support.
  - The operation, management and monitoring of eligible broadband connections. **Include this MIBS option among your selections if you are considering managed services for your school or district.**
- 4. After clicking the MIBS option, identify if you intend these services for:**
  - Equipment you own or plan to own.
  - Equipment you lease or plan to lease.



#### Add the leasing option

Include the MIBS option among your selections during the application process (option 3) if you are interested in receiving quotes for both purchasing and leasing. **This does not obligate you to lease equipment.** Instead, it preserves the option to do so after you conduct a cost-benefit analysis.

## What to look for when selecting a provider

If your organization chooses to replace legacy infrastructure with leased equipment that can be managed for you, look for a provider that can offer the most benefits to your organization:

- Expansive portfolio of advanced technology.
- Scalable bandwidth to fit your needs.
- Licensing fees included in the agreement.
- High-quality service built around 100%, 24/7/365 U.S.-based support.
- Experience with the E-Rate program and K-12 institutions.

## Support educational technology with an experienced partner

Is your school or library meeting the FCC's bandwidth goal? Spectrum Enterprise® provides managed services for new equipment and acts as a single partner for your E-Rate needs. We help simplify the process, freeing you to concentrate on other key efforts and educational initiatives. When it is time to replace or upgrade equipment, you can lease it with managed services through Spectrum Enterprise to extend your E-Rate funding and create education solutions that power new levels of student achievement.

[Learn more](#)

1. "Connect K-12's 2022 Report Shows 67% of U.S. School Districts Now Meet FCC Internet Connectivity Benchmark." Connected Nation, November 16, 2022.

2. Ibid.

3. Tajammul Pangarkar, "EdTech Statistics, Opportunities and Obstacles." Market.us Scoop, May 9, 2023.

4. "E-Rate Trends Report." Funds for Learning, 2023.