

The National Education Rate Program (E-rate)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *What is the E-rate Program?*

A: The E-rate program is a formal federal program that provides discounts on telecommunications, Internet access, internal connections, and basic maintenance of internal connections to eligible entities that complete an annual application process.

Q: *Who is responsible for the E-rate program?*

A: The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has regulatory authority over the program under the 1996 Telecommunications Act. The FCC has appointed the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) to administer the program. Within USAC, the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) manages the day-to-day operations of the program.

Q: *How much money is available in the E-rate program?*

A: \$2.25 billion is available annually to eligible applicants.

Q: *Who is eligible to apply for E-rate?*

A: Schools, public libraries, and consortia are eligible to apply for E-rate. For specific restrictions on the eligibility of these populations, please see <http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step01/>.

Q: *What is the application process?*

A: E-rate has an annual application process. The E-rate year runs from July 1 – June 30. Each fall, applicants post a Form 470, followed by a Form 471 during the winter E-rate filing window, and a Form 486 after receiving a Funding Commitment Decision Letter. For a more specific timeline, please see the E-rate timeline provided on www.polycom.com/erate.

Q: *What sorts of things are eligible for E-rate discounts?*

A: Funding is requested under four categories of service: telecommunications services, Internet access, internal connections, and basic maintenance of internal connections. Discounts for support depend on the level of poverty and the urban/rural status of the population served and range from 20% to 90% of the costs of eligible services.

Applicants must provide additional resources including end-user equipment (e.g., computers, telephones, etc.), software, professional development, and the other elements that are necessary to utilize the connectivity funded by E-rate

An Eligible Services List showing eligibility by service and/or product is released annually by the FCC. For a complete listing of Polycom products and their E-rate eligibility, please see

<http://www.erateproviderservices.com/products/products.aspx/polycom>.

Q: How can Polycom help my school or library with E-rate?

A: Polycom provides a team of E-rate experts for one-on-one customized E-rate assistance, complimentary E-rate support throughout the E-rate application process, free educational webinars on the E-rate application process, and useful tools for managing the E-rate process. Polycom does not have a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN).

Q: I'm a vendor of Polycom products. How can Polycom help my company with E-rate?

A: Polycom provides a team of E-rate experts to assist you with your E-rate needs. These experts will provide E-rate training to your staff via on-site support, videoconferencing, and webinars. The E-rate experts will also provide guidance and training on federal regulations concerning E-rate, compliance, and audit requirements.