

# 5 Best Practices to Maximize Your E-Rate Funding



## Know Your Eligibility

**Libraries:** Public, elementary, secondary, academic, and research libraries are eligible, with exceptions. School libraries must have a separate budget from the school to qualify.

**K-12 Schools:** Nonprofit elementary and secondary schools are eligible. For-profit schools and nonprofits with endowments over \$50 million are not eligible.



## Understand E-Rate Basics

E-Rate, established in 1997 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), provides 20%-90% discounts on approved telecommunications, internet access, and internal connections costs for eligible K-12 public schools and libraries. E-Rate funding is reassessed every five years by Congress and the FCC.

The Universal Service Administrative Co. (USAC) administers the Universal Service Fund, dedicated to enhancing service accessibility.



## Equipment and Services Categories

**Category One (C1):** Covers connectivity up to and outside the building, including data transmission services and internet access.

**Category Two (C2):** Encompasses connectivity inside the building, including internal connections, managed internal broadband services, and basic maintenance of internal connections.



## Determine Your Discount Level

Eligibility for discounts is determined by a discount matrix, based on the percentage of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Discounts range from 20% to 85% (Category Two), which means budget constraints should be considered when specifying infrastructure projects.



## Budget Management and Planning

Each applicant operates on a five-year funding cycle. The budget is subject to the same five-year cycle. Schools and libraries can request their entire budget cap in a single year or request portions of it over five years. It's essential to plan carefully, as the budget resets at the completion of each five-year cycle.

By following these best practices, you can maximize the benefits of your E-Rate funding, ensuring that your libraries and schools can access the essential equipment and services they need to enhance connectivity and educational opportunities.



## What is E-Rate?

[E-Rate](#) is a program that provides discounts to eligible schools and libraries for telecommunications, internet access, and internal communications.

## Technology Tailored for K-12 Schools and Libraries

Empower your educational institution with exceptional performance even in high-density classrooms and spaces, ensuring reliable Wi-Fi connectivity for students and teachers.

By working in partnership with Iron Bow and Cisco Meraki, your educational institution can harness the potential of cutting-edge technology to enhance the learning experience and bridge the digital gap. Together, we are dedicated to creating cost-effective and secure solutions that empower K-12 schools and libraries to shape the future of education.

### E-Rate Funding Capabilities

E-Rate funding can be used to purchase the following hardware and licensing:



#### Cisco and Meraki Access Points

Deliver Superior performance in high-density classrooms and spaces with reliable Wi-Fi.



#### Cisco and Meraki Switches

Streamline network operations and troubleshooting, offering complete network visibility and control, thus saving valuable time for your IT team.



#### Cisco and Meraki SD-WAN and Security Appliances

Safeguard your school and library networks while keeping sensitive data protected. These robust appliances provide the security and reliability required for modern educational environments.

# Time is running out!

Reach out to our team of experts to make the most of your E-Rate funding today.

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