**SEGRA**®

# Understanding **E-Rate**

Technology sits at the heart of the modern classroom, and the new normal for learning is not limited to one place, one time.

A high-quality education driven by high-performance connectivity doesn't have to come with a high price tag. As a proud participant in the nation's E-Rate program, we're committed to doing our part to ensure schools and libraries can obtain the access and solutions required for a successful educational environment.

## Not sure what E-Rate is, why it's important or how to get started? This FAQ can help.

**Q: What is E-Rate?**

**A:** E-Rate — also known as the Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund — is a needs-based funding program run and managed by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) that helps offset the costs of obtaining program-approved internet connectivity and telecommunications services.

**Q: Who can apply?**

**A:** Primary and secondary schools, K-12 districts and libraries that meet the program's criteria can apply individually or as a cooperative effort.

**Q: Why is E-Rate so important?**

**A:** Virtual learning and the "anywhere classroom" have emphasized the importance of adequate connectivity for staff and students. Supporting an increasingly digital-first education can be expensive, and some organizations struggle to cover the cost of necessities like high-speed broadband or Wide Area Network (WAN).

**Q: How much funding is available through E-Rate?**

**A:** The amount of funding available each year is based on demand, with an annual cap of roughly $4.5 billion

**Q: How much funding is provided to recipients?**

**A:** The amount of funding received is determined on a case-by-case basis according to demonstrated need. Discounts for qualifying services range from 20% up to 90%.

**Q: What is the application process like?**

**A:** There are six steps involved with getting started in the E-Rate program:  competitive bidding, service provider selection, applying

for discounts, application review, starting services, and pay for discounted services OR pay for services and submit reimbursement invoice to USAC

**Q: What are the benefits of using an E-Rate consultant?**

**A:** Generally speaking, most applicants do not have employees who are tasked solely with filing for E-Rate funding and reimbursement. The director of IT is usually tasked with completing the application and seeking reimbursement. Ensuring compliance with all the E-Rate process rules and deadlines can be overwhelming to balance in addition to normal job duties. Instead of trying to manage the process on your own, a reputable E-Rate consultant can provide valuable guidance.

**Q: How do you find an E-Rate consultant you can trust?**

**A:** A quick online search can identify several consultants in your area, but finding one you can trust might not be that simple. Here are a few ways to identify a reliable consultant:

Reach out to other schools and libraries in your area or contact your state's E-Rate coordinator for consulting resource recommendations

Call the references provided by prospective consultants to get their perspective on the consultant's experience and knowledge, especially regarding your particular technology needs and district size.

Ask potential consultants about their process and pricing for appealing negative decisions from USAC and/or the FCC. Keep in mind that many consultants don't accept responsibility for filing an appeal or for the potential loss of funding, so it is essential to know what to expect.

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## Education Solutions

From cybersecurity to compliance and regulation to customer service, there are lots of priorities that education institutions can't afford to ignore. Knowing the challenges and pressures facing the industry, Segra has a winning roster of cybersecurity, connectivity, voice, colocation and cloud services including:

Internet
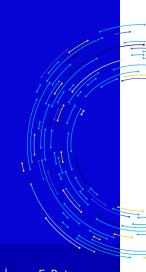
Ethernet Access

Dark Fiber

Wavelengths

SD-WAN

DDoS Protection

Voice

Segra is proud to be an E-Rate service provider, committed to supporting student success with a proven track record of delivering effective connectivity solutions for schools.

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