

Clarity Solutions, Inc.

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E-rate Frequently Asked Questions

- **Q: What is the E-rate, and what does it cover?**
- A: The E-rate was implemented as part of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996. It's administered by the FCC and USAC. E-rate reimburses schools and libraries for up to 90% of the cost for:
 - Telecom services (local/long distance, WAN services, voice mail, cellular, paging, etc.)
 - Internet access & related services (including e-mail service)
 - Certain internal network (LAN) equipment, telephony solutions and cabling (for needier schools)

- **Q: Aren't more affluent schools disqualified from E-rate?**
- A: No. This is a common misconception. Although the neediest schools qualify for a 90% discount, many private schools still qualify for at least a 20% discount rate, and often 40%. If you qualify as a K-12 institution, public OR private, under ESEA/NCLB, then you are almost always eligible.

- **Q: Can I get funding for the current fiscal year? If not, when must I apply?**
- A: Deadlines for the current fiscal year occur in the winter prior. However, letting us help you plan ahead can ensure you avoid missing deadlines. Some applicants plan as early as July the year prior.

- **Q: Must my school/library have a technology plan? (NEW RULE, 6th Report & Order, Sept 2010)**
- A: For E-rate purposes, as of Funding Year 2011 schools and libraries no longer required have a technology plan for Priority 1 funding requests. However, if you're applying for Priority 2 funding (Internal connections or related maintenance), a technology plan is required. In either case, a sound technology plan is like a road map; it helps you chart a course for technology success in your organization.

- **Q: Can't I just have an E-rate vendor file all those forms for me? It's so confusing.**
- A: Having a service provider file for you violates FCC competitive bidding rules and can possibly lead to a denial or other consequences. Only your in-house staff or a vendor-neutral consultant like Clarity Solutions should be allowed to assist with your application. The competitive bidding process ensures that funds are spent wisely and that a fair marketplace is encouraged.

- **Q: Our school doesn't apply for NSLP, which is also the basis for E-rate. What can we do?**
- A: If you believe even a handful of your students would otherwise be eligible for NSLP (free/reduced lunch), there are other FCC-approved alternative discount mechanisms that Clarity Solutions can help you investigate. If not, your school can still usually get a minimum 20% discount.

- **Q: I heard that if I get E-rate funding, then I have to comply with CIPA (the Children's Internet Protection Act). How do I comply, what all is involved, and is it worth it?**
- A: Clarity Solutions can guide you through the compliance process, but if you and/or your community strongly believes that students and/or library patrons should have access to the vast resources of the Internet, then it is probably well worth it. Also, generally speaking, if you're funded for anything other than local and long distance service, you will be required to comply with CIPA.

- **Q: How can Clarity Solutions help us with E-rate?**
- A: Hiring a consulting firm like Clarity Solutions is like hiring your own E-rate department. We alleviate the burden of the application process. At times, applicants may find themselves tackling overlapping deadlines and confusing compliance issues. With our 100% success record, we're certain to get you funded.