Core 2025 Event Sponsors

OCLC
Diamond Sponsor

Turner
Gold Sponsor

AGATI FURNITURE
Silver Sponsor

MARGARET SULLIVAN STUDIO
Silver Sponsor

George Blood LP
Audio/Video/Film/Data
Silver Sponsor

Core FORUM

NOVEMBER 12–14, 2025 | DENVER, COLORADO

Educational & Practical

- 40+ thought-provoking sessions
- 2 keynote presentations
- Poster sessions
- Preconferences and tours

Networking & Fun

- Opening reception
- Dine-arounds

Exclusive Core Member Benefits

100+ free, on-demand webinars
(more added each month!)

27% discount on all courses & webinars
Stack up savings to grow your skills

Exclusive access to OCLC's WMS sandbox

10-20% discount
On all books

Core
Koha

Exclusive access to Koha sandbox

Join Core Today!

Scan Me

Strengthening Your Library's Funding Opportunities with E-Rate:

Working with State Coordinators to Get Your Share

June 29, 2025

Lauren Abner – Kentucky Department for Libraries & Archives, lauren.abner@ky.gov
Christine Morris – Ohio Public Library Information Network,
christine@oplin.ohio.gov
Megan Janicki – ALA Public Policy & Advocacy Office, mjanicki@alawash.org
Kristen Corra – Schools, Health, & Libraries Broadband Coalition, kcorra@shlb.org

ALA American Library Association

Quick Polls:

Getting to know you – show of hands

- **Role in your organization**
  - Public library – State library – Other
  - Tech staff – Fiscal staff – Admin - Other
- **Role with E-Rate**
  - Have filed before – Interested in filing – Just curious
- **Goals for program**
  - 3 goals in session description – Other goals

ALA American Library Association

E-Rate Basics

- One of four FCC 'universal service' programs designed to provide comparable levels of connectivity to eligible groups, regardless of where they are located.

- 20-90% discounts on eligible products and services based on National School Lunch Program data and classification as rural or urban

- Core principles: competitive bidding and cost-effectiveness

Library E-Rate FY 2025

- National demand (schools + libraries) for FY 2025
  - $3.227 billion
- Library demand for FY 2025
  - $106.484 million – 3% of total funds requested

- Library participation FY 2025
  - 1,664 independent libraries
  - 1,011 library systems
  - 11,346 library branches listed as recipients of services - ~65% of public library branches

Library Eligibility

- Must meet the definition of library or library consortium found in the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), as amended by the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018 (20 U.S.C. § 9122)

- Must be eligible for LSTA assistance through a state library agency

- Must have funding as an independent entity separate from any schools except Tribal College or University (TCU) libraries serving the public

Laurel County Public Library, Kentucky

E-Rate Eligible Service List

- Category One
  - Monthly Internet Access
  - Leased data lines (lit fiber, dark fiber)
  - Self-provisioned networks
  - Bookmobile hotspot service
  - <mark>Hotspot lending for library patrons</mark>

- Category Two
  - Internal Connections – networking equipment & licenses, cabling
  - Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections
  - Managed Service

ALA American Library Association

E-rate Cycle
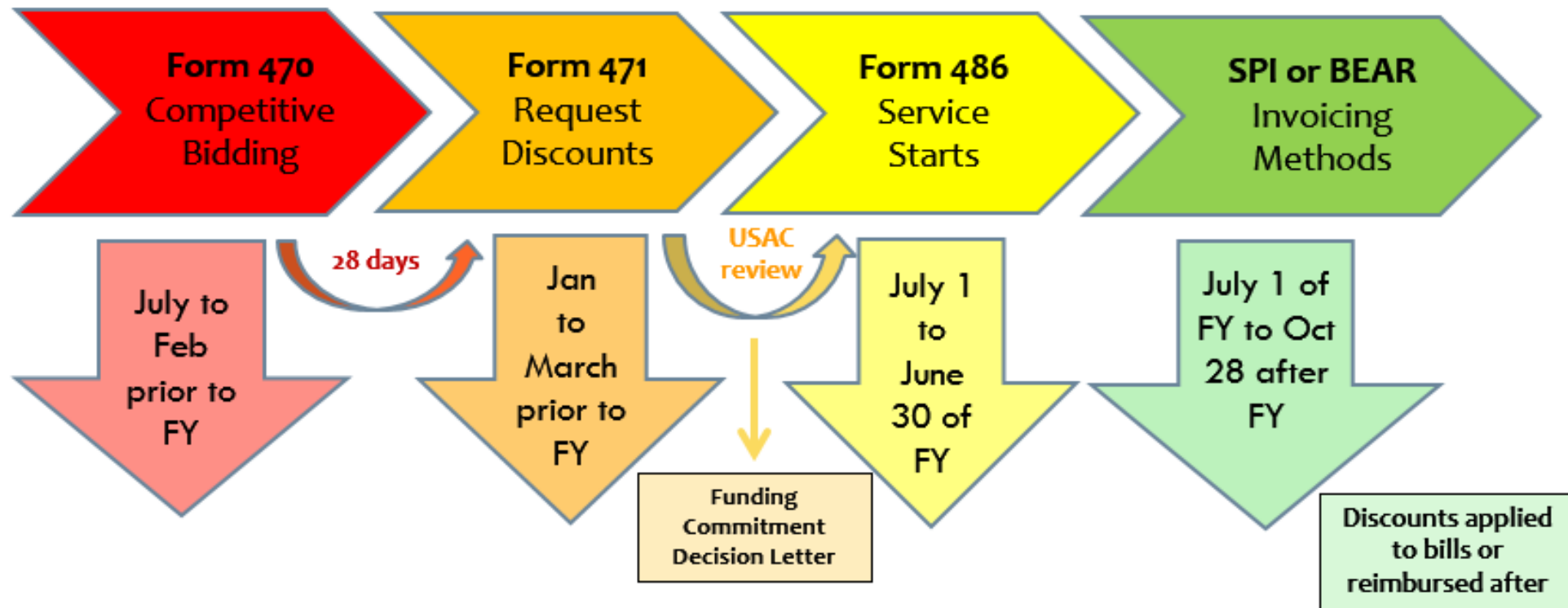
Bidding Exemptions

Category One

- CABIO – Commercially Available Broadband Internet Option
  - At least 100 Mbps download
  - At least 10 Mbps upload
  - $3,600 or less per year, including installation

Category Two

- Exemption for purchases of up to $3,600 per eligible library location per year

- Any combination of Category Two services (internal connections, maintenance, managed services)

ALA American Library Association

Case Study: Kentucky

- # of gigabit library systems
  - 2014: 5 systems
  - 2024: 54 systems – 980% increase over 10 years
- Of 200+ service outlets, only 21 have less than 100 Mbps
- 50+ bookmobile hotspot requests each year
- Growth in E-rate discounts for satellite, kiosk, or mini-branch outlets

ALA E-Rate Support

ALA has provided E-Rate advocacy, guidance, and support to state libraries since the E-Rate program began.

- ALA E-Rate & Universal Service page: https://www.ala.org/advocacy/erate

- List of State Library E-Rate Coordinators: https://www.ala.org/advocacy/e-rate-state-coordinators

ALA American Library Association

Training Next-Generation State E-Rate Coordinators

- COSLA and ALA E-Rate Task Force awarded $249,999 2024 Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program grant

- Grant covered training costs, travel, and expert facilitators

ALA American Library Association

Goals of IMLS Grant

- Strengthen the link between the federal E-Rate program and the local library utilization of it; increase access to E-Rate funding which is underutilized

- Build capacity and knowledge of State Coordinators, support professional learning, and create conditions for increased longevity in these roles

- Strengthen the entire field with expertise and peer engagement

ALA American Library Association

What did we learn?

- E-Rate is hard, but there is help
- E-Rate is always changing
- We are all still learning
- We are in this together
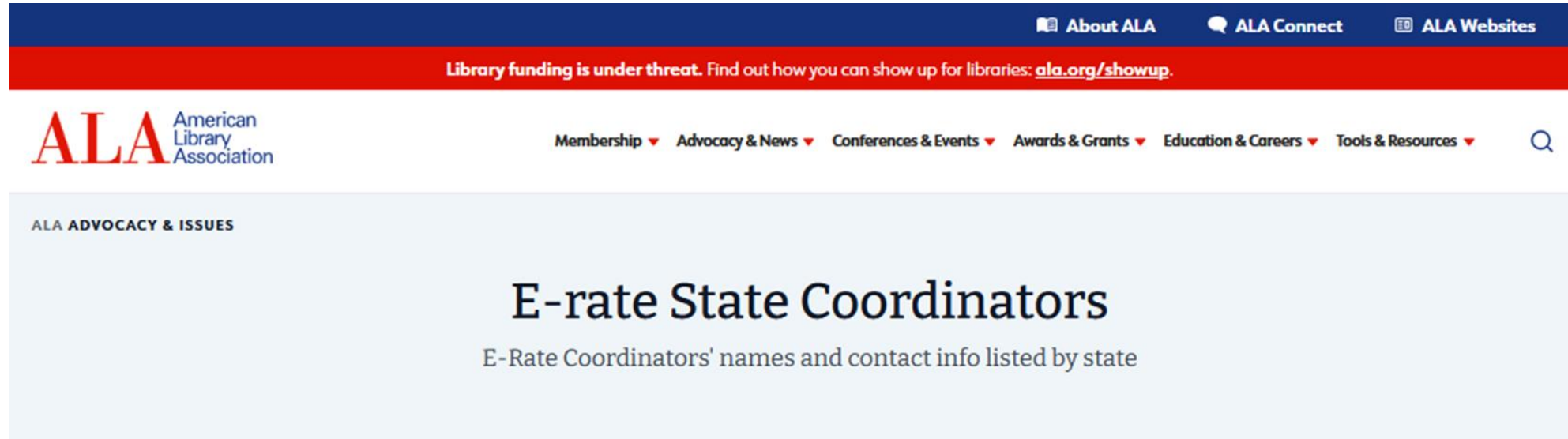
ALA American Library Association

Where to start?

https://www.ala.org/advocacy/e-rate-state-coordinators
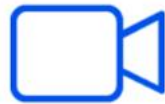
Get access to EPC*

https://forms.universalservice.org/portal/login

Find training: from USAC*

Learn more about the E-Rate program.

Videos

USAC's videos are designed to help you understand and manage the filing process, FCC requirements, and other elements of the E-Rate program.

Browse our Videos

Webinars

Join USAC for live training webinars provided throughout the year for E-Rate program participants, and watch recordings of those you may have missed.

View our Webinars

E-Rate News Brief

The E-Rate News Brief gives you details about upcoming funding commitments, application process tips, and other timely information. Be sure to subscribe ☑.

Consult our News Brief

https://www.usac.org/e-rate/learn

ALA | American Library Association

Find training: from your state

Training

E-rate: What's New for 2025? Online Workshop - Recording and presentation slides - November 26, 2024, 3 hours.

E-rate 101: Just the Basics for 2025 - Recording and presentation slides - July 24, 2024 *NCompass Live* webinar, 1 hour 18 minutes.

USAC's E-rate Training Webinars - upcoming and recordings.

USAC Videos - step-by-step tutorials on each E-rate form.

Previous NLC E-rate Workshops: 2024 2023 2022 2021 2020 2019 2018 2017 2016 2015 2014 2013 2012 2011 2010

ALA American Library Association

Find training: from your state

Find training: from your state

Library Support

Ask a Librarian

Public Library Director's Toolkit

Kits

Funding for Libraries

Library Policies

Library Programs

E-rate

KDLA Training & Assistance

Why bother?

Without E-Rate	Sample Discount	With E-Rate

$300 per month
X 12 months

= **$3600 per year**

$300 per month
- 90% discount

= $30 per month

$30 per month
X 12 months

= **$360 per year**

https://www.usac.org/wp-content/uploads/e-rate/documents/resources/Find-Your-Library-Discount-Guide.pdf

Why $3600?

CABIO for Category 1

Commercially Available Business Class Internet Option
- *Low cost requirement*
  = less than $3600 per year
- *High speed requirement*
  = at least 100 Mbps download & 10 Mbps upload

https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/competitive-bidding/competitive-bidding-exemptions

ALA American Library Association

Another $3600 bonus

Low Cost Internal Connections
for Category 2

- *Category 2 equipment & services that are less than $3600 total for a single year for one library is eligible for this exemption*
- *The exemption is that you do not have to do a competitive bid per the E-Rate rules and process*

https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/competitive-bidding/competitive-bidding-exemptions

Seriously, why bother?

ALA | American Library Association

Because E-Rate is not going away

and because we have each other

ALA American Library Association

ALA Public Policy and Advocacy

Broadband and Telecommunications Policy Priorities

- E-Rate and USF
- Digital Opportunity
- Content Access and Secure Open Networks

show up
FOR OUR LIBRARIES

ALA American Library Association

Partners in Policy: SHLB and ALA

Who is the SHLB Coalition?

- Membership Organization
  - Over 300 members
  - CAIs, public interest groups, for-profit companies, etc.
- Mission Driven
  - Our goal is to promote access to reliable, affordable, multi-gigabit broadband to anchor institutions and their communities
- Broadband Advocacy and Education
  - FCC, Congress, States

What's Happening at the Federal & State Level?

FCC's Cybersecurity Pilot Program

- Adopted in 2024

- Funded within USF/outside of E-Rate

- $200M / 3 years

- Applications: 2,734 (~93%schools, 4% libraries, 3%consortia)

- FCC Chairman dissent (issue with statutory authority)

FCC's Hotspot Lending Program

- Adopted in 2024

- Funded by E-Rate (starting FY 25)

- A lot of program rules/safeguards!

- ~8,000 schools/libraries applied

- Subject to rollback via Congressional resolution

- 5th Circuit court case

ALA American Library Association

What's Happening at the Federal & State Level?

FCC v. Consumers Research

- Supreme court case determining the constitutionality of the Universal Service Fund (contribution mechanism)

- SHLB is a named party; ALA filed an Amicus brief
  - Emphasized the importance of USF funding and stakes to anchors (like libraries) if E-Rate funding was abruptly ended

- After the decision? Congressional efforts to reform USF
  - Relaunch of bicameral, bipartisan USF working group

The Importance of Advocacy

Why Should Libraries Lean Into their Identity as an Anchor Institution?

- You know the needs of your communities
  - Librarians work with people – DC works with policies. Your insight reflects the needs of our communities that should be reflected in those policies

- Your voice matters to the FCC/Congress
  - We need your stories and data to help inform future policies and programs (and keep ones that are working)
  - One story could change someone's mind!

ALA American Library Association

How to Get Involved

What Can You Do to Advocate for Policies/Programs?

- Gather data/stories in a formal way
  - You do so many things; make sure you are keeping track of what you do!
- Know what you need and how to ask for it
  - When it comes to funding for programs/resources, do you know your elevator pitch?
- Stay informed
  - Organizations like SHLB & ALA often provide membership opportunities, conferences, and free resources like webinars, newsletters
- Participate however you can/are allowed
  - Sign-on letters
  - Fly-Ins and FCC/Hill meetings

ALA American Library Association

Please take a moment to evaluate this program