

## **8.28.24 Webinar: E-rate HotSpot Lending - Answering Your Questions Moderated Q&A**

### **Webinar attendees who are not current E-rate applicants**

1. There is a lot of discussion about broadband funding these days and coincidentally, there are various federal funding programs to help support broadband connectivity. When we talk about the FCC's "Hotspot Lending Initiative," which broadband funding program will support it?
2. How can a school or library determine their Category 1 discount rate?
3. Is E-rate funding provided in the form of reimbursement?
4. New applicants might be unfamiliar with potential review of their E-rate applications. Can you briefly explain what a "PIA" review is?

### **Administrative Considerations**

1. Can you explain the timeline for this program?
  - a. Once the funding has been approved, will it go into effect January 1, 2025?
2. The draft FY2025 ESL has been released. Is there anything applicants need to know about timing or other considerations for the ESL?
  - a. Where do Wi-Fi hotspots appear on the ESL?

### **Budgeting**

1. Can you explain how each school and library's budget works?

- a. Does a school or library calculate how much funding its organization would get over three years?
  - b. What is the difference between calculating a school's budget versus a library's budget?
    - i. Does each branch of a library system apply based on individual square footage?
    - ii. What happens if a library's square footage changes due to remodeling?
  - c. Is there a floor for tiny schools with less than 99 students?
2. If the applicant first applies in the third year of its budget, is it still restricted to 45% restriction?
3. Can applicants purchase services or equipment above the \$90 device/\$15 service caps?
  - a. Will the program provide a subsidy / discount above those cap? For example, what would E-rate pay for a \$30 service plan?
4. Are service providers considering reducing monthly service fees to be closer to the \$15/hotspot/month cap?
5. The Order mentions that applicants may not "double dip."
  - a. What does "double dipping" mean?
  - b. Can entities use other funding to pay for their non-discounted share?
6. Are there suggestions for how small schools or libraries can learn more about participating in E-Rate if they don't currently apply for E-rate funds?

## Eligible Hotspot Recipients

1. Who are eligible to receive Wi-Fi hotspots/services?
  - a. Is the program limited or open to all library customers? Are there certain criteria?
  - b. What are the school population limitations? (no Kindergarten, Pre-K, or Head Start).
  
2. Can hotspots be loaned to non-profit organizations or are they for individual families only?

## Eligible Equipment

1. Can you discuss what hotspot *devices* are eligible?
  - a. Does a cell phone qualify as a “hotspot”?
  - b. Do the devices need to be new?
  - c. If a school or library already circulates hotspots, can they now use E-rate funds towards the cost of that process?
  - d. Are other devices (tablets, laptops, chromebooks) eligible for E-rate support?
  
2. Can you discuss what *services* are eligible?
  - a. Is fixed wireless eligible?
  - b. Can a school or library purchase devices and services from multiple service providers?
  - c. Can a school or library fund yearly device subscriptions for a hotspot MDM platform with E-rate funding?

## Breakage/Lost/Stolen Devices

1. Can a school or library request a replacement if some of the hotspots are broken/damaged during the three year contract?
  - a. Will E-rate cover any cost for damaged device replacements?
  - b. What if the service provider wants to exchange the broken unit for a new one?
2. Will E-rate cover any warranties?
3. For stolen hotspots, is a school or library still required to pay the remainder of the contract?
  - a. Does the school or library need to fill out a police report if a user does not return a device?

## Suspending Service

1. Can a school or library disable/turn off a device until it is returned?

## Warehousing

1. What is the difference between hotspots "available for check out" (with the service turned on) and "warehoused" devices?
  - a. Are devices waiting to be distributed considered "available for check out" or are they "warehoused?"

## Acceptable Use Policies

1. Can you explain what an Acceptable Use Policy is, and what schools and libraries should include in them?

2. Do public library users have to sign any kind of statement verifying eligibility to borrow the devices?
3. Are there limitations on lending periods?
  - a. Would long-term loans be allowed?
4. Are there specific usage rules for public library patrons, such as use for work and education, not streaming movies or playing games etc.?

### **CIPA Compliance**

1. Is CIPA compliance required for e-rate funding for hotspots?
2. Can you address how filtering works on hotspots?
  - a. Do providers have web filters on the hotspots or will they in the future?

### **Service Provider Obligations**

1. What are the main obligations service providers have under these rules that don't currently exist elsewhere under E-rate?
2. What happens if a user checks out a hotspot but does not use it? Will it be automatically disconnected?
3. If a line of service is terminated due to non-usage, can the service provider continue to charge the school or library for future months?
  - a. Are providers prohibited from billing the library even if the library has a contract with the provider?
4. If a line of service is terminated due to non-usage, can the service provider charge the school or library a termination fee?
  - a. Does this apply to public libraries, too?

5. How does a school or library track that a device is not being used?
  - a. Will the service provider let them know?
  - b. What does the school or library need to keep track of?
  
6. Will the new SPAC certifications that providers must agree to collect and report usage data, notify customers of inactive units after 60 days, and turn them off after 90 days satisfy the E-rate program requirements, or will cellular service providers also have to develop new contracts specifically for this program?
  - a. Following up on this, if an existing contract for service wins a bidding process, does it need to be amended to include language regarding data reporting and inactive units?
  - b. Are you aware if the major providers are creating new E-rate specific plans and contracts?

### **Disposal Requirements**

1. How long do libraries have to keep hotspots that are no longer in service?
  - a. Can schools or libraries throw them away?