

WHO IS SHLB

Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition advocates for policies and programs that empower anchor institutions to access and promote open, secure, high-quality broadband services, fostering connectivity and opportunity for all.

www.shlb.org

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**save our
E-RATE**

Keep every school and library connected

What to Know: The FCC's Latest Inquiry Into the E-Rate Program

What Is E-Rate?

E-Rate is the bipartisan federal program that makes internet access affordable for schools and libraries across the country. Created under the 1996 Telecom Act as part of the Universal Service Fund, it provides discounts up to 90 percent on broadband service and the equipment schools need to deliver Wi-Fi inside their buildings, with the deepest discounts going to the highest-poverty and most rural institutions. Nearly every school district and over half of public libraries in America participates in E-Rate.

Why It Matters

E-Rate helps keeps every school and library connected. The program supports roughly 52 million students in E-Rate-supported schools, nearly 60% of whom qualify for the National School Lunch Program, meaning the program reaches low-income students who would otherwise be left behind. For many rural and small-town communities, the local library funded by E-Rate is the only source of free public internet. There are E-Rate-funded classrooms and libraries in every state and congressional district.

The Threat

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has opened a rulemaking that could end or limit E-Rate. On June 25, 2025, the FCC adopted a proposal, *WC Docket No. 26-133*, that asks some of the most consequential questions the program has faced in its nearly 30-year history: whether E-Rate has "fulfilled its mission," whether it should be terminated, and whether it should be narrowed to only rural areas. The proposal also floats new conditions on how schools and students may use funded technology.

Our Ask

E-Rate must be preserved. Congress created E-Rate and directed the FCC to connect every school and library in the country. The FCC has no authority to terminate a program Congress mandated, yet its current proposal asks whether to end or scale it back.

We're asking Members of Congress to defend E-Rate directly. Go on record in support of the program, and make clear to the FCC that a Congressionally created program is not the agency's to dismantle. Schools and libraries in every state and district rely on E-Rate, and low-income and rural communities would be hit first and hardest.

Connectivity is not optional. Tens of millions of students and library patrons rely on E-Rate-funded internet to learn, work, and access essential services. A stable, well-funded E-Rate is an investment in every state and district's students and workforce.

Visit our campaign action center at SaveOurERate.com to learn more.