

# E-RATE eNEWS



September 2025

## Getting Ready for the 2026 Funding Year

It's nearly time to kick off the 2026 E-Rate filing season! Be on the lookout for our 2026 kickoff e-mail later in October. A new five-year Category 2 budget cycle will begin in the upcoming funding year, which means we will definitely need to update your entity enrollment this fall. Stay tuned for more information in our next communication. Here are the upcoming budget figures – now is the time to begin planning!

### School Budgets

- \$201.57 per student (up from \$167)
- Funding Floor: \$30,175 (up from \$25,000)

### Library Budgets

- \$5.43 per square foot (up from \$4.50)
- Funding floor: \$30,175 (up from \$25,000)

## Setting Your Category 2 Budget Floor

This year we recommend, if possible, that you file a Category 2 application in the first year of the five-year

cycle. By filing a Form 471 and receiving a funding commitment, whether you make the purchase or not, your **Category 2 budget floor** will be set for the entire five-year cycle.

By doing this, your Cat 2 budget will never go lower, and can still increase over the budget period. It will help clarify your budget for planning purposes over the next five years, and it will protect you in the event that your enrollments drop over the next five years.

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## Program Integrity Reviews

Program Integrity Reviews (PIA) ensure that the E-Rate program rules are followed, and that applications are filed correctly. While your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager can answer many reviews, there are times when we must reach out to you for additional information. If you receive a request from your Account Manager for information, please respond promptly! Missing a USAC review deadline can result in a funding denial.

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## Personnel & School Changes

If you have any personnel changes in your district (or expect to), please let us know. This especially applies to contacts who are listed as Account Administrators and users in the E-Rate EPC Portal. If you need your Account Manager to let you know who that person is, please contact us.

Also, if there are any school openings, relocations, closings, or mergers planned, please advise us as soon as possible.

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## E-Rate Document Retention

E-Rate rules require that you keep all E-Rate-related documentation for at least ten years after the last date of service. Documentation can be stored electronically: you are not required to keep paper copies. This documentation includes all bids received (both winning and losing), bid evaluation worksheets, contracts, bills, and vendor correspondence.

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## 2024 Category 1 Reimbursement Deadline is in October

Category One - The deadline to collect your 2024-25 E-Rate *Category One* reimbursements is in October. If you haven't submitted the information requested by your E-RATE ONLINE account manager, please do so immediately.

Category Two Projects - If you have completed your FY2024 E-Rate Category Two project(s) and paid your invoices in full, please send us a copy of the paid invoice, and we will have USAC process your reimbursement. **The deadline to make any changes to your committed equipment or request a delivery extension is September 30, 2025.**

If you are concerned about completing a project before the September 30, 2025 service delivery deadline, we can request a one-year extension if filed before the deadline. Please contact your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager if you need an extension.

Please let your Account Manager know if you applied for services or equipment for FY 2024 but do not intend to move forward with the purchase. Once we have written confirmation, we will complete the necessary forms to return your unused funds to your Category 2 budget.

If you were supposed to receive SPI discounted bills but did not, please let us know.

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## 2025 SPI Discounts

If your district prefers SPI discounts (discounted vendor invoices), you should expect to see discounts within the next few months on your FY 2025 bills. If you don't, please contact your E-RATE ONLINE Account Manager.

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## Get a Referral Bonus!

We're growing — and we want your help! Do you know someone who could benefit from our services? When you refer a new client to E-RATE ONLINE, you'll receive a \$500 referral bonus off your Service Level Agreement as a thank-you once they sign on.

[Have someone in mind? Contact us!](#)

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200 Boston Post Road, Orange, CT 06477

866.671.9274 | [erateportal.com](http://erateportal.com)



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