E-RATE

The E-Rate Program, or, more precisely, the Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Mechanism, provides discounts to assist most schools and libraries in the United States to obtain affordable telecommunications and Internet access. Four service categories are funded: Telecommunications Services, Internet Access, Internal Connections Other Than Basic Maintenance, and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections. Discounts range from 20% to 90% of the costs of eligible services depending on the level of poverty and the urban/rural status of the population served. Eligible schools, school districts and libraries may apply individually or as part of a consortium.

The E-Rate Program supports connectivity—the conduit or pipeline for communications using telecommunications services and/or the Internet. The school or library is responsible for providing additional resources such as the end-user equipment (computers, telephones, etc.), software, professional development, and the other elements that are necessary to realize the objectives of that connectivity.

FAQ
• Where do I go for more information?
  Yes, please go to the Universal Services Administrative Company (USAC) Web site at http://www.usac.org/sl/.
• Are charter schools eligible for E-Rate supported discounts?
  Yes
• What services/equipment are eligible for E-Rate discounts?
  This information is updated annually by USAC and is available on its Web site at http://usac.org/sl/applicants/beforeyoubegin/eligible-services-list.aspx.
• Where can I go for training?
  The Universal Services Administrative Company (USAC) provides training events and training materials on its Web site. Additionally, the Alabama State Department of Education (Office of Technology and Data, E-Rate) provides multiple yearly training opportunities specific to state needs. Information can be found on these events at www.alsde.edu.

NOTE: This working document “highlights” basic e-rate information for the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act (Act 2015-3), but does not attempt to address all content specific to this topic. Information included in this working document will be updated as the Alabama State Department of Education develops specific extracurricular and interscholastic activities guidance. Please send questions to pcs@alsde.edu.