ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO E-RATE SUCCESS

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Extreme Networks and the US E-Rate Program

Extreme Networks has been a trusted partner of the E-Rate programs for over 20 years, helping schools and libraries enhance educational outcomes through AI-native cloud networking solutions. As one of the leading category one providers, we have been closely involved with the program since its inception, adapting to each change to better serve our educational partners.

We simplify and secure IT infrastructure, enabling seamless connectivity that empowers educators and students. Our innovative solutions leverage artificial intelligence, analytics, and automation to create effortless networking experiences that drive value and foster innovation in learning environments.

Extreme works with thousands of schools, community colleges, and universities, and we are committed to accelerating digital transformation in education. Our top-rated services and support enable educational institutions can confidently tackle challenges and deliver progress like never before.

Extreme Networks delivers better outcomes such as:

- **Operational Efficiency**: AI-driven analytics provide proactive situational awareness, enhancing staff communication and engagement.

- **Personalized Learning**: Extreme solutions seamlessly integrate with your student directory to allocate bandwidth precisely when and where it is needed.

- **Student Safety and Privacy:** Cloud security tools empower IT administrators to safeguard student information, featuring data encryption and logging capabilities to meet education-specific compliance requirements.

History and Modernization of the E-Rate Program

Recent changes have expanded on the basic program that goes back to July 23, 2015, when the FCC released the landmark update to the E-Rate program with the 7th Report and Order. The infusion of funding available for schools and libraries has helped them reach important digital learning goals by connecting students to resources in STEM areas that are necessary for preparing students to compete in the global economy. Mobile learning and the device explosion had left many schools behind the curve and the E-Rate program is the primary education technology funding source in the US with the money behind the message to move our classrooms into the digital world.

E-Rate Program Highlights

On December 3, 2019, the Federal Communications Commission issued a Report and Order making significant changes to E-Rate rules for Category Two funding applications. The highly anticipated Order adopts a permanent Category Two budget system for all applicants and establishes streamlined Category Two rules which were put in effect in Funding Year 2021. The Order extends the "test period" rules used during Funding Years 2015-2019 for a final year while increasing all applicant budgets by 20% for Funding Year 2020. Read more highlights.

Funding requests for Category One requests are met first and Category Two is funded with the remaining resources. Since FY2015, demand has not exceeded available funding. This program has been an overwhelming success since its inception in 1998 and this evolution only serves as the critical next step. The program highlights below are focused on the impact to service providers and how you are poised to help schools connect to the future.

- Revamping the Priority systems into two categories of service
    - Category 1 – Internet access and WAN (traditional voice services are being phased out, services to be eliminated beginning with FY2015: paging, e-mail, voice mail, and web hosting)
    - Category 2 – LAN/WLAN

Funding Allocation Formula for School Districts

Starting in Funding Year 2021, the 5-year budget calculations will work as follows:

For schools and school districts: (Enrollment) x $167 = total pre-discount budget $ available for a 5-year period Example—5,000 (Student enrollment) X $167 X = $835,000 pre-discount budget for 2021-2025

If this district in the example above with 5,000 students has a 70% discount rate, then USAC would cover up to $584,500 (70%) and the district would be responsible for the remaining $250,500 (30%). This 30% is often referred to as the district's "match" portion.

The calculation is $4.50 per square foot for all libraries (both rural and urban). The per-site funding "floor" was increased from $9,200 per site to $25,000 in the beginning of FY 2021.

Discount rates are now calculated for the entire district. District enrollment divided by eligible student count. Applicants can file per entity but must use the new discount rate.

- District-wide budgets

- Eligible Non-Instructional Facilities (NIFs) do not have pre-discount budgets; the applicant must allocate NIF costs to one or more of the entities that will benefit from the service

- MAXIMUM discount that can be received for Category 2 is 85%

- Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS) will be eligible for Category 2 support. Applicants can enter into multiyear contracts, for up to 5 years. Support will only be committed for one year at a time. Applicants that are in multiyear contracts will have the option to file a streamlined 471 application after the initial 470/471 application process.

- Competitive bidding will still be required for managed wireless

- Eligible managed Wi-Fi expenses include the management and operation of the LAN/WLAN, including installation, activation, and initial configuration of eligible components, and onsite training on the use of eligible equipment. Eligible managed Wi-Fi expenses do not include a managed voice service.

- Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) aims to commit or deny all workable applications by September 1 of the funding year.

- Transparency – Item 21 attachments will begin to be accessible to the public from USAC's website. Applicants and service providers will not be required to disclose past year's information.

- All documents and applications are in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC). Invoicing is streamlined and reimbursement to the applicant is now paid directly to the applicant when using the BEAR process.

- Invoice Extension – Applicants are allowed to request and automatically receive a single one-time 120-day extension of the invoicing deadline.

% of Total Students Eligible for National School Lunch Program	Category One Schools and Libraries Discount Matrix		Category Two Schools and Libraries Discount Matrix	
	Discount Level		Discount Level	
	Urban Discount	Rural Discount	Urban Discount	Rural Discount
<1	20	25	20	25
1-19	40	50	40	50
20-34	50	60	50	60
35-49	60	70	60	70
50-74	80	80	80	80
75-100	90	90	85	85

Discount Matrix for Category 2

Eligible Services List

Here is the most recent (2025) eligible services list.
https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-24-1104A1.pdf

Category One

Data transmission and/or Internet access services are eligible in Category One. These services include:

- Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM)
- Broadband over Power Lines
- Cable Modem
- Digital Subscriber Line (DSL)
- DS-1 (T-1), DS-3 (T-3), and Fractional T-1 or T-3
- Ethernet
- Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN)
    - *Note: Dedicated voice channels on an ISDN circuit are no longer eligible.*
- Leased Lit Fiber
    - *Leased Dark Fiber (including dark fiber indefeasible rights of use (IRUs) for a set term)*
- Self-Provisioned Broadband Networks
    - *(applicant owned and operated networks)*
- Frame Relay
- Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS)
- OC-1, OC-3, OC-12, OC-n
- Satellite
- Switched Multimegabit Data Service
- Telephone dial-up
- Wireless (e.g., fixed wireless; microwave; mobile service for use on school buses; or mobile service for use with Wi-Fi hotspots)

NOTES:
(1) Eligible costs include monthly charges, special construction, installation and activation charges, software , modulating electronics and other equipment necessary to make a Category One wired or wireless broadband service functional ("Network Equipment"), and maintenance and operation charges, including costs for software needed for the operation of or maintenance of Network Equipment. Network Equipment and maintenance and operation costs for existing networks are eligible. All equipment and services, including maintenance and operation, must be competitively bid.
(2) Applicants that seek bids for leased dark fiber must also seek bids for leased lit fiber service and fully consider all responsive bids. Similarly, applicants that seek bids for self -provisioned broadband networks must also seek bids for the needed connectivity via services provided over third-party networks, and fully consider all responsive bids.
(3) Applicants may seek special construction funding for the upfront, non-recurring costs for the deployment of new or upgraded facilities. The eligible components of special construction are construction of network facilities, design and engineering, and project management.
(4) Staff salaries and labor costs for personnel of the applicant or underlying beneficiary are not E-Rate eligible.
(5) Consulting services that are not related to the installation and configuration of the eligible components are not eligible. These include services related to application assistance, program advice, and other activities not tied directly to actual installation and initial configuration of components.
(6) Basic technical support (i.e., software updates including bug fixes and security patches, and remote technical support) appropriate to maintain reliable operation of school bus network equipment is eligible for support.

Category Two

Eligible Broadband Internal Connections:

- Antennas, connectors, and related components used for internal broadband connections
- Cabling
- Caching
- Firewall services and firewall components separate from basic firewall protection provided as a standard component of a vendor's Internet access service
- Racks
- Routers
- Switches
- Uninterruptible power supply (UPS)/battery backup
- Access points used in a local area network (LAN) or wireless local area network (WLAN) environment (such as wireless access points)
- Wireless controller systems
- Software supporting the components on this list used to distribute high-speed broadband throughout school buildings and libraries (applicants should request software in the same category as the associated service being obtained or installed)

Ineligible Products

- End-user equipment, PCs, mobile devices, projectors, peripherals
- Video and telephony equipment
- Server infrastructure (excluding caching)
- Non-critical infrastructure
- Advanced security, content/spam/virus filtering, physical security, management/monitoring
- Extended or upgraded warranties

NOTES:
(1) Functionalities listed above that can be virtualized in the cloud, and equipment that combines eligible functionalities, like routing and switching, are also eligible.
(2) A manufacturer's multi-year warranty for a period up to three years that is provided as an integral part of an eligible component, without a separately identifiable cost, may be included in the cost of the component.
(3) Caching is defined as a method that stores recently accessed information. Caching stores information locally so that the information is accessible more quickly than if transmitted across a network from a distance. A caching service or equipment that provides caching, including servers necessary for the provision of caching, is eligible for funding.
(4) Applicants may request both equipment and the software necessary to use the equipment on the FCC Form 470, or request just the equipment on the FCC Form 470, and still receive support for both the equipment and the software necessary to use the equipment (e.g., right-to use software or client access licenses) by requesting the equipment and software either together or separately on the FCC Form 471. However, software upgrades and patches, including bug fixes and security patches, are considered basic maintenance of internal connections, and as such, applicants should seek bids for basic maintenance of internal connections if they intend to request funding for these services.
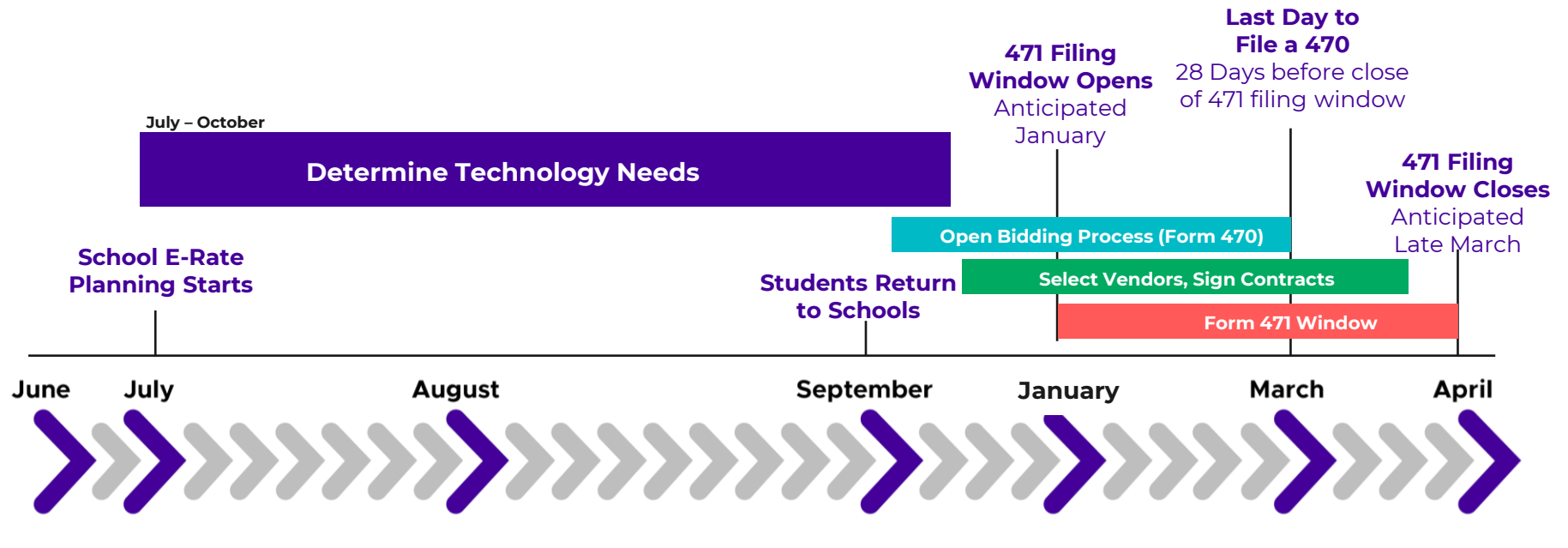
Extreme Networks Eligible Products

Use our new [E-Rate Eligibility Lookup Tool](#).

E-RATE ELIGIBLE	REQUIRED CAPABILITIES	ELIGIBLE SOLUTION	HOW WE DO IT BETTER

Category 2 - Internal Connections	High-Density, Pervasive Wi-Fi Connectivity	• All wireless access points
		• Necessary accessories and antennas
		• Necessary right-to-use subscription licenses for **ExtremeCloud™ IQ**
		  • **ExtremeCloud IQ Standard – includes Pilot, Essentials and Extreme AI Expert**
		  • **ExtremeCloud IQ Pilot**
		  • **ExtremeCloud IQ Navigator**
		• All virtual wireless controllers
		• All hardware wireless controllers and Universal Compute Platforms that host wireless controllers
			• Highly scalable, seamless, and secure mobile Wi-Fi connectivity
			• Integrated AI services increase efficiency and reduce operational cost
			• Flexible deployment options: public cloud, private cloud, edge cloud, or on-prem
			• Scalable and resilient cloud-driven orchestration
			• Simplified right-to-use licensing and integral universal LLW streamlines the E-Rate filing process

Category 2 - Internal Connections	Wired Edge and Backhaul	• All switches – Edge to Core • Necessary switching fan modules, power supply modules, and cables (each SKU filed as a separate line item - not bundled together) • Necessary core and connectivity licenses	• Integrated Campus Fabric technology automates network changes and provides resiliency and hypersegmentation • High-performance wired backhaul, cross-platform stacking, embedded application controls • Integrated AI services increase efficiency and reduce operational cost • Scalable and resilient cloud-driven orchestration • Simplified right-to-use licensing and integral universal LLW streamlines the E-Rate filing process
Category 2 - Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS)	Artificial Intelligence for IT Operations (AIOps)	• ExtremeCloud IQ CoPilot	• Enhanced AIOps streamlines IT daily activities • Leverages explainable ML to provide verifiable actions • Delivers better student outcomes via proactive problem identification
Category 2 – Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC)	Services and Support	Basic Maintenance • TAC and OS = 100% eligible • Advanced Hardware Replacement = 0% eligible	• Extreme Networks' Global Technical Assistance Center • Support Center (GTAC) provides technical support 24x7x365 • ExtremeWorks offerings let you choose the exact level of service ideal for your organization

Cybersecurity Pilot Program	Zero-trust access control, identity management, secure hybrid connectivity	• Universal Zero-Trust Network Access (ZTNA)
		  • Secure subscriptions (NAC)
		  • Secure Plus subscriptions (+ZTNA)
		• ExtremeControl (NAC)
		  • Network access control subscriptions
			• Frictionless user experience and consistent security policy for users, applications, and devices
			• Single identity-based zero trust policy engine for both networks and applications
			• Automated configuration and enforcement via cloud-managed Universal Devices
			• Consistent device policy based on over 40 attributes centrally implemented, enforced end-to-end
			• 3rd Party integration with firewalls, MDM, and content filters for CIPPA Compliance

FY 2025 Estimated E-Rate Timeline

July – October

Determine Technology Needs

School E-Rate Planning Starts

Students Return to Schools

471 Filing Window Opens
Anticipated January

Last Day to File a 470
28 Days before close of 471 filing window

471 Filing Window Closes
Anticipated Late March

Open Bidding Process (Form 470)

Select Vendors, Sign Contracts

Form 471 Window

June | July | August | September | January | March | April

Extreme Networks for K-12 Education

Useful information on Extreme Networks and E-Rate.

- E-Rate Resource Center

- E-Rate Eligibility SKU Lookup Tool

- K-12 ExtremeCloud IQ Quick Order Guide

- Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program

- Important E-Rate Terminology

- Eight E-Rate Myths

- Official USAC Website

- FCC E-Rate Update

Extreme Networks Case Studies: US School Districts

- **Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter Public School (BART), Massachusetts:** Bringing Digital-First Learning into the Classroom with Enhanced Wireless
- **Elmbrook School District, Wisconsin:** Elmbrook School District Enhances Connected Experience Through Agile, Resilient Network
- **Tornillo ISD, Texas:** Maximizing IT Budget with Futureproof Wireless Network at Tornillo ISD
- **King Chavez Neighborhood of Schools, California:** King Chavez Neighborhood of Schools Powers Digital Learning
- **Upper St. Clair School District, Pennsylvania:** Extreme Networks helps Connect Upper St. Clair School District with a Single Network
- **Epic Charter Schools, Oklahoma:** Epic Charter Schools Build a Personalized, Virtual Learning Experience on Extreme
- **Aldine ISD, Texas:** Aldine ISD Enhances Educational Experiences with Extreme Networks

Customer Quotes

"The Fabric is the best part of Extreme. Its made our deployment in the network engineering side so much easier. The things they are doing with it today have made it amazing. I know it's going to help us accomplish our goals with technology for our school districts and make everything so much easier."

Justin Davidson, Network Engineer, Jefferson County Public Schools

"If a student's test fails due to tech difficulties, there are real-world implications to that, so that it was nice to have an infrastructure back in place that just met everything I threw at it."

Christopher Tawes, Director of Technology, BART Charter

"ExtremeCloud IQ is a major tool we can use to see the devices on the wireless and understand what they're trying to access. We're seeing where all the bandwidth is going and understand what the students are trying to access, what we need to block, and what devices are trying to get on the network—especially outside devices that we don't want on our network."

Christopher Escarsega, Network Administrator, Tornillo ISD

"Wi-Fi should be as easy as writing on a chalkboard. It should just be in place and you don't have to worry about it. Since installing the Extreme Networks solution, we don't give a second thought to Wi-Fi."

Raymond Berrott, Director of Technology, Upper St. Clair School District

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