

Dear Educator,

The Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) is opening the E-Rate program for Funding Year Four (FY4) — July 2001 through June 2002. In order to take advantage of the program, you will need to begin the process no later than mid-December and finalize your application by mid-January, 2001. Because these deadlines are quickly approaching, we strongly encourage you to file for E-Rate funding immediately.

Many Sprint customers have applied for E-Rate funding in previous years and are familiar with the application procedure. A few customers have not taken advantage of this Federal program. As your local service provider, Sprint contributes to the fund and would like all of our customers to receive the benefits available. We encourage you to apply for funding to support your technology plans for 2001, and are happy to guide you through the process.

To assist you in the E-Rate funding process, we have developed a brief overview of the program, which is enclosed with this letter. We believe this overview will offer helpful tips to all potential E-Rate participants regardless of your level of E-Rate knowledge. We have also included an E-Rate Quick Reference Guide to post in a convenient place in your office. As always, your first source for E-Rate information should be the SLD. You can call their Client Service Bureau at **1-888-203-8100** or visit their Web site at **www.sl.universalservice.org**.

We are dedicated to helping you receive the benefits of E-Rate funding and want to ensure you make the most of your E-Rate dollars. For additional assistance with E-Rate, you can contact your Sprint sales representative, or your E-Rate service representative toll-free at: **1-877-231-3850**. Or, feel free to contact me at: **913-323-4822**.

Sincerely,



Barbara B. Stoll

Barbara Buchhorn Stoll
E-Rate Program Manager
Sprint Education Markets Group



General E-Rate Information and Steps to Follow

If you've never applied for E-Rate funding or need to review the program details, please note these general guidelines.

Write your wish list

- ▶ Develop a technology plan for your school or library. Make sure your plan is current through the next funding year (through June 2002.)
- ▶ Technology plans must be approved by your state or the process for approval must be started when you file for your E-Rate award.
- ▶ Sprint has developed the *Education Tool Kit on Technology* if you need assistance in writing the plan. You can receive this tool kit by completing the enclosed fax-back sheet.

Review your past telecommunications invoices

- ▶ Gather your monthly invoices for local telephone service, long distance, wireless phones, pagers, dedicated services and Internet Access.
- ▶ It's important to collect all of your invoices to ensure your application accurately reflects your telecommunications needs. For example, some circuits have meet-point billing, which means two companies are paid for parts of the same circuit. By collecting invoices from all your telecommunications services, you can help ensure that all of your costs are accounted for.

Locate copies of your telecommunications contracts

- ▶ For written contracts signed on or before July 10, 1997, you can file under pre-existing contracts.
- ▶ After filing the Form 470 (Description of Services Requested) and waiting 28 days for competitive bids, you will need to sign a contract with a specific Service Provider for services to begin July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002. Sprint offers a special option allowing your contract to be "E-Rate contingent".
- ▶ For contracts signed after July 10, 1997, and before the original 470 posting in 1998, special rules may apply. Check the SLD Web site at www.sl.universalservice.org for assistance. See more information on Form 470 and 471 below.
- ▶ Multi-year contracts will require only one 470 posting to be eligible for E-Rate funds over the life of the contract, but you must file a new 471 each year. For new services, you'll need to file a new 470. For services on month-to-month or tariffed billing, you'll also need to file a 470 posting each year.

This information is for informational purposes only and should not be substituted for obtaining independent legal counsel in the relevant jurisdiction.



Know your facilities

- ▶ The E-Rate program is for K-12 public and private schools and public libraries. The program does not include funding for pre-K, adult education or administrative costs. Administrative costs are only covered if part of a “combined network for learning.”

Know your services

- ▶ The SLD has posted a list of eligible E-Rate services on their Web site.
- ▶ Most of your local telecommunication billing is eligible with the exception of voice mail and telephone sets.
- ▶ While Sprint can provide some guidance in applying for eligible services, the ultimate decision remains with the SLD. Review the SLD Web site or call their Client Service Bureau at 1-888-203-8100.

Determine your school/library discount percentage

- ▶ Your discount percentage is based on your urban/rural percentage and the number of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program.
- ▶ You can also use scholarship statistics or a survey of 100% of your students with a 50% response rate.
- ▶ Libraries can use the statistics from the schools they serve. It’s important to work together to get the most E-Rate dollars for your community.

File a Form 470 or 471

- ▶ The first step in applying for E-Rate funding is the submission of Form 470. Next, you will need to file Form 471 which is the application form naming a specific service provider.
- ▶ Your anticipated needs for technology should accompany the form, including your basic telecommunications service requirements.
- ▶ After posting the Form 470, you must collect bids from service providers for 28 days.
- ▶ We recommend collecting more than one bid if possible. This will protect you should your original bidder have problems fulfilling the contract commitment.
- ▶ Form 471 has a submission deadline of mid-January. If you don’t file within that deadline, your chances for funding are greatly reduced.
- ▶ After selecting your service provider, you can submit the Form 471. The closing date for FY4 471 applications is mid-January, 2001.

Document all of your steps and phone calls

- ▶ Always keep detailed records of your actions and correspondence in the event of an audit.

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Common Errors Made when Applying for E-Rate Funding

28-Day Waiting Period Violation

- ▶ After filing a Form 470, you MUST wait 28 days for competitive bids to come in. If you file any earlier, you will be denied funding.

Applying for ineligible services

- ▶ Check the eligibility list posted on the SLD Web site at www.sl.universalservice.org, call their Client Service Bureau at 1-888-203-8100, or talk with your Sprint sales representative to ensure you are applying for eligible services.

Providing too little or too much documentation for Form 471, Block 5, #21

- ▶ You will need to include an attachment to the Form 471 that provides a description of the service, including a breakdown of components and costs. Often applicants either forget to attach the information or they include irrelevant price sheets. It is best to provide documentation only for those eligible items that you are requesting for E-Rate funding. Do not include pricing on ineligible items for which you are not seeking support. Sprint can assist you in this process.

Service start date error

- ▶ The earliest possible start date for FY4 is July 1, 2001; you cannot start service before the official start date. The expected end date is June 30, 2002. It is possible that the FCC will extend the final date for installations to September 30, 2002 (as was done in FY1 and FY2), but that is not guaranteed.

Failure to send certification

- ▶ You must sign and mail the certification page. Your application will not be processed without the certification page. We recommend requesting a return receipt when mailing the certification page and the Forms 470 and 471.

Combining local and long distance service into one FRN

- ▶ There are separate SPIN's for local and long distance service; therefore, you'll need a separate Form 471, Block 5 worksheet.

Technology Plan not approved

- ▶ Each state has a method of approving your technology plan. The plan doesn't have to be approved when you file your Forms 470 and 471 but should be finalized by the time you receive funding.

Filing too late/Filing outside the window

- ▶ The SLD has deadlines for filing Form 471. If you miss the deadline, you may miss out on any E-Rate funding opportunities for a full year. We strongly recommend that you submit your application as soon as possible and not wait until the last minute.

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Free Technology Planning Tools

One of the first steps in applying for E-Rate funds is to develop a technology plan for your school or library. Sprint has developed free tools that can assist you in planning for your technology needs.

The *Education Tool Kit on Technology* has various components to help K-12 educators gauge their school district's technology needs and provide guidance in technology planning.

The *Educator's Guide to Wide Area Networking* provides detailed information, diagrams and worksheets to help educators build an effective Wide Area Network (WAN) solution for their school district. This guide includes E-Rate icons that designate specific products and services that may qualify for E-Rate funding.

To receive a free copy of the *Education Tool Kit on Technology* or the *Educator's Guide to Wide Area Networking*, simply complete this form and fax it to: 1-888-259-5790.

- Yes, I would like a copy of the *Education Tool Kit on Technology*.
- Yes, I would like a copy of the *Educator's Guide to Wide Area Networking*.
- Please have a Sprint representative contact me regarding my technology needs.

Name _____

Facility/District _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-Mail _____

Thank you for your interest. Please fax this form to Sprint at 1-888-259-5790.

