

Eligible Services for E-Rate FY2026 (Draft)

Category 1:

Telecommunications – Voice – no longer eligible – this includes both landline and cellphones as well as all supporting services (PRI Lines, SIP trunks etc). WAN or Internet lines supporting VoIP are still eligible.

Telecommunications – Data – no changes to discount rate

Data Lines / WAN / Fiber (any technology)

Wireless / Fiber / Radio Links

School Bus WiFi including equipment, installation and monthly service charges (*new in 2024*)

Internet Access

Access Lines/Ports - any technology/ any speed

DNS/DHCP/Firewall/Managed Router Services may be included

~~New for FY2025 – The FCC has added WiFi hotspots and off-campus Internet usage beginning with FY2025. This funding has been challenged in congress and eligibility is not guaranteed.~~

As of 09-30-2025 per FCC decision, Hotspots and Bus WiFi are no longer eligible for E-Rate support.

Category 2: FY2026 is the first year of a new 5-year cycle for Category 2 Budgets (2026-2030).

1. Your school or district budget for Category 2 will be \$201.57/student over the five years 2026-2030. This is a pre-discount amount and represents the total amount over 5 years. For example; if you have 1000 students then you have \$201,570.00 to spend on Category 2 items over those 5 years. The amount of your reimbursement is based on your discount rate.
2. This amount is no longer tied to individual schools and the equipment purchased is allocated to the district overall – not to individual schools. Thankfully – you now have only a single, district-wide Cat2 budget to manage.
3. Your budget amount is based on your enrollment when you first file for Category 2. Your original 5 year budget amount should stay the same regardless of changes in enrollment after that (it can go up but now down).

Eligible Items for Category 2:

Internal Connections (*may include Project Management. Installation and Configuration*)

Cabling / Connectors / Racks (fiber and copper)

UPS Equipment

Wired LAN/WAN - Switches / Routers

Wireless LAN/WAN – Access Points / Controllers

Firewalls

Caching Servers

BMIC – Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections

Break/Fix Maintenance of all eligible equipment

Software Upgrades, Tech Support

MIBS (Managed Internal Broadband Services)

This is a fixed fee management of your WiFi network. Can be equipment that you already own or it can be a 'service' where the vendor retains ownership of equipment. Benefit is that this eligibility includes network management. See SLD's definition below.