

TYPICAL REQUESTED SERVICES

...from the respected E-rate Compliance Specialists

www.FundsForLearning.com



April 2007

Telecommunications Services

FCC Definition:
"...services that are used to communicate between sites. The services must be provided by a telecommunications carrier - i.e., an organization recognized by the FCC as providing telecommunications services on a common carrier basis."

Typical Eligible Telecom Requests:

- Phone lines and related fees (POTS/Centrex/ISDN/DIDs)
- Wide Area Networks and other high-speed lines (ISDN, Frame Relay, T1, DS3, etc.)
- Cellular phone and paging service
- Long-distance telephone service

Important Notes:

- Most telecommunications services qualify so long as they are used by District employees or students.
- Discounts can be requested on the purchase of equipment.
- All telecommunications services must be provided by a company recognized as a Common Carrier.

Internet Access and Email

Typical Eligible Internet Access Requests:

- Dialup/56k
- Broadband Access: Access through T-1, T-3, DS1, DS3, DSL, cable modem, Frame Relay, wireless access, etc.
- Firewall Services
- Web Hosting
- E-mail Service

The fees associated with web hosting (content creation/manipulation excluded) and e-mail service are eligible as a *P1* service. This could be an advantage for a wealthy school district who may not otherwise receive discounts on the Internal Connections (web and email servers) required to implement in-house solutions for hosting the district's website and providing students with e-mail addresses.

The only caveat is that the SLD is insistent that the services be void of any content creation or manipulation charges (or that said content charges be cost-allocated.) Additionally, e-mail service must be able to send and receive e-mail messages to Internet users (services that provide internal messaging only are ineligible.) Generally speaking, "portal" applications like Blackboard and charges associated with e-mail filtering, virus protection, etc are ineligible for support.

FCC Definition:
"...basic conduit access to the internet, and apply to services, not purchases of equipment used in Internet Access."



Navigating the process takes a partner who's been there...

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Internal Connections

FCC Definition:

"Internal Connections are components located at the applicant site that are necessary to transport information to classrooms, publicly accessible rooms of a library, and to eligible administrative areas or buildings."

Typical Eligible Internal Connections Requests:

- Cabling
- PBXs
- Eligible File Servers
 - DNS
 - DHCP
 - E-mail
 - Web
 - Terminal
- Hubs, Switches, Routers, etc.
- Proxy
- Network Cards (priced separately)
- Gateways
- Firewalls
- Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)
- Wireless Access Points
- Video Distribution and Conferencing Equipment (Codecs, MCUs)

Distance learning is a hot topic in the ed-tech market right now. Many service providers provide video-conferencing solutions for school districts that are eligible under Internal Connections. All of the end-user devices are **not** eligible (video cameras, displays, speakers, etc) but the equipment necessary to distribute video information is eligible for support. Also, some library video companies build servers that stream educational content to classrooms. The actual content (and disk storage for the content) is not eligible for support, but the servers that stream and distribute that content are eligible for support.

Wireless equipment (access points, hubs, antennas)

Many School districts do very large wireless projects - in most cases, adding wireless access to a school site on top of their existing wired network. A common misconception that we have seen with schools is that a wireless network in a building that already has a wired network is "redundant," but this is often not the case. Provided it is consistent with their tech plan, applicants can blanket a building with wireless access over and above their existing wired LAN. Wireless network cards are also eligible for support when priced separately (many schools will retrofit existing equipment with wireless access through the use of wireless NICs.) Equipment that provides wireless network monitoring and maintenance is **not** eligible.

IP Telephony equipment (VoIP) - call processors, gateways, routers, PBX equipment

Another common misconception is that VoIP *hardware* is ineligible. While certain restrictions are placed on VoIP *services* when purchased as a Priority 1 request, if an applicant wants to install an IPT system at their district most of the equipment is eligible for support as Internal Connections. Commonly requested VoIP components include call processing servers, voicemail hardware, and voice switches, routers, and gateways. Telephone handsets and other end-user devices are still ineligible.

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Basic Maintenance

FCC Definition:

"Basic Maintenance ensures the necessary and continued operation of eligible internal connection components at eligible locations."

Typical Eligible Basic Maintenance Requests:

Basic Maintenance can be purchased for any eligible hardware, servers included, and be eligible for E-rate discounts. Basic Maintenance can be requested every year (2 out of 5 rule doesn't apply). Network monitoring or management services are typically NOT eligible under the Basic Maintenance category.

Things to note:

- Discounts/reimbursement on Basic Maintenance can only be requested one year at a time. If a multi-year contract is signed for maintenance, the applicant can still only apply for the portion of the contract that covers the funding year in which the request is made.
- Also, in order to be eligible for E-rate discount/reimbursement, maintenance services must be performed within the funding year for which they are requested (July 1 - June 30). Any maintenance performed outside of this time-frame will be denied for discount/reimbursement.
- When submitting E-rate funding requests for basic maintenance have available a list of all equipment (and location) to be maintained. This list of equipment is typically requested during a PIA review. Any ineligible items should be cost allocated out of any funding requests.
- Be prepared to answer questions regarding the type of servers, server purpose and functionality and adequately record and store maintenance logs.

Basic Maintenance services must be considered "basic." Per the SLD's Eligible Services List:

"Basic maintenance services are 'necessary' if, but for the maintenance at issue, the connection would not function and serve its intended purpose with the degree of reliability ordinarily provided in the marketplace to entities receiving such services without e-rate discounts. Basic maintenance services do not include services that maintain equipment that is not supported or that enhance the utility of equipment beyond the transport of information, or diagnostic services in excess of those necessary to maintain the equipment's ability to transport information.

Basic maintenance is eligible for discount only if it is a component of a maintenance agreement or contract for eligible services or products, and these maintenance services are cost effective. The agreement or contract must specifically identify the eligible products or services covered, including product name, model number, and location. The following products and services are generally eligible: repair and up-keep of eligible hardware, wire and cable maintenance, basic technical support and configuration changes. The following products and services are ineligible: on-site technical support (i.e., contractor duty station at the applicant site) when off-site technical support can provide basic maintenance on an as-needed basis, services such as 24-hour network monitoring and network management, help desks (that provide a comprehensive level of support beyond basic maintenance of only eligible components), and technical support contracts that are more than basic maintenance."

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