

Dear Tribal Leader,

We recognize the urgent need to expand Internet access throughout Indian Country. As the pandemic has made clear, broadband connections are essential now more than ever: they allow people to work and search for jobs, educate their children, access health care and information, and stay connected to loved ones. These benefits remain out of reach for millions of people—particularly those living on Tribal lands.

Libraries can and do play a significant role in providing digital access and support for Internet use. That is why the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) are working together to spread the word about a recent FCC rule change that will make it easier for Tribal libraries to obtain funding for broadband services through the FCC's Schools and Libraries program, also referred to as the E-Rate program.

The E-Rate program provides eligible schools and libraries with discounts of up to 90 percent on broadband service, connections, equipment, and maintenance. Due to an outdated definition of library in the FCC's rules, however, some Tribal libraries were unable to apply for E-Rate support—until now. The FCC just voted on Thursday, January 27 to fix this problem, making it clear that qualifying Tribal libraries are eligible for support through the E-Rate program. Tribal libraries may apply for E-Rate support through March 22 for Funding Year 2022, which runs from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

To learn more or apply, please visit <https://www.usac.org/e-rate> or call Kraynal Alfred, Tribal Liaison at the Fund administrator, Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), at 202-572-5773.

We'd like your help in spreading awareness about this important opportunity for Tribal libraries to obtain funding for broadband services and equipment through the E-Rate program. Can you share information about the new FCC rule change and the broadband funding opportunity with Tribal libraries and other interested stakeholders?

General information about the FCC's E-Rate program can be found at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/e-rate-schools-libraries-usf-program>. IMLS, as a Federal grant-making agency, has a long history of working with Tribal Libraries, and resources are available for digital access and inclusion at <https://imls.gov/grants/grant-programs>.

We believe that this recent rule change will have a significant impact on the ability of Tribal libraries to help connect their patrons, and hope you will join us in making sure that your libraries are aware of this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jessica Rosenworcel
Chairwoman
Federal Communications Commission

Crosby Kemper
Director
Institute of Museum and Library Services