

Make Your Voice Heard

CoSN's Guide to Filing E-Rate Comments with the FCC

Comments Due: October 13, 2026

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is conducting a broad review of the E-Rate program and asking schools, libraries, and other interested parties to comment on its future.

Among other issues, the FCC is considering whether E-Rate has achieved its connectivity goals and whether the program should be narrowed, restructured, or potentially ended. The FCC is also considering new requirements related to children's online safety and screen time.

School district voices are especially important. The FCC needs to understand why E-Rate remains essential to providing students and educators with affordable, reliable, high-capacity connectivity and what reducing the program would mean for local schools and communities.

This guide will help you develop and file comments with the FCC.

Focus on Your Top Issues

You do **not** need to respond to every question raised by the FCC.

Focus on what you know: how E-Rate works in your community, why it continues to matter, and what proposed changes could mean for your students, educators, and schools.

Your comments can help the FCC understand:

- How your district relies on E-Rate;
- Why connectivity remains an ongoing need rather than a problem that has been "solved";
- What would happen if E-Rate funding were reduced or eliminated;
- How school connectivity needs are continuing to evolve; and
- Why decisions about teaching and learning, including decisions about the appropriate use of technology and screens, should remain primarily with local educators, school leaders, school boards, and families.

The most valuable contribution you can make is telling your district's story.

What Is at Stake?

E-Rate has helped transform connectivity in America's schools. But the fact that most schools are now connected to the Internet does not mean the need for E-Rate has disappeared.

Schools need more than an Internet connection. They need connectivity that is affordable, reliable, secure, and capable of keeping pace with changing educational needs.

The FCC is asking whether the progress made over the past three decades means E-Rate should now be reduced or more narrowly targeted. It is also asking how schools would be affected if E-Rate support were limited or eliminated and how connectivity needs will change in the years ahead.

District comments can help make clear that connectivity is an ongoing operating need. Schools must maintain, upgrade, and replace networks as technology and instructional needs evolve.

What Should My District Say?

You might organize your comments around three or four basic questions.

A. Why does E-Rate continue to matter?

Explain what E-Rate means for your district.

Consider describing:

- How E-Rate helps your district afford reliable connectivity;
- Why E-Rate remains important even though your schools are already connected;
- How connectivity supports everyday teaching, learning, assessment, communication, and school operations; and
- How student and educator needs have changed as technology has become more deeply integrated into education.

If possible, include a specific example or local data point.

Pro Tip: Go to www.save-our-e-rate and use the **Look Up Your E-rate Data**. Add your address and it will provide data for how much funding your district/school received over the last five years.

B. What would happen if E-Rate were reduced or eliminated?

Help the FCC understand the practical consequences.

For example:

- Would your district have to redirect money from other educational priorities?
- Would network upgrades or replacement projects be delayed?

- Would your district purchase less connectivity or reduce services?
- Would some schools or communities be affected more than others?

You do not need a detailed financial analysis. A straightforward explanation of the choices your district would face can be very valuable.

C. Why is connectivity an ongoing need?

One of the central questions in the proceeding is whether widespread broadband availability means E-Rate has accomplished its mission.

Your district can explain why being connected is not the same as having sufficient and affordable connectivity.

Schools must continually respond to:

- Growing network demand;
- Changes in teaching and learning;
- New instructional and administrative technologies;
- Increasing reliance on cloud-based tools and resources; and
- The need to maintain and modernize school networks over time.

The question should not simply be whether a school has an Internet connection. It should be whether schools can continue to provide the level of connectivity students and educators need at a cost communities can afford.

D. Who should make decisions about technology and screen time?

The FCC is also considering whether E-Rate funding should be tied to new requirements governing children's screen time and use of technology, including possible parental opt-out requirements.

Districts can strongly support protecting children online while making an important distinction:

Decisions about how technology is used for instruction, including how much screen-based instruction is appropriate, are fundamentally educational decisions. Like decisions about curriculum, instructional materials, teaching methods, and classroom practice, they are best made locally by educators, school leaders, school boards, and families.

A single federal requirement may not reflect differences in student age, instructional purpose, subject matter, individual student needs, or local educational approaches.

Districts should explain why the FCC should remain focused on E-Rate's core connectivity mission rather than using a broadband support program to establish federal rules governing classroom instruction.

Use Local Examples

Comments do not need to be long. **Specific examples are more useful than general statements.**

Helpful information might include:

- Number of students and schools in your district;
- Your district's E-Rate discount;
- Approximate E-Rate support received;
- What the district would pay without E-Rate;
- Examples of network investments made possible by E-Rate;
- Connectivity challenges unique to your community; and
- An example of what your district would have to change if support were reduced.

Instead of simply saying:

"E-Rate is important to our district."

Consider saying:

"E-Rate allows our district to maintain the reliable connectivity used every day by students and educators. Without this support, we would have to redirect local funding from other educational priorities or delay needed network upgrades."

Use your own experience and your own voice.

A Simple Structure for Your Comments

Your comments do not need to be lengthy or written by an attorney.

1. Introduce your district.

[District] serves approximately [number] students across [number] schools in [community/state].

2. Explain why E-Rate matters.

E-Rate helps our district afford the reliable, high-capacity connectivity that students and educators rely on every day. Although our schools are connected, maintaining and upgrading that connectivity is an ongoing need.

3. Explain what would happen without it.

If E-Rate support were reduced or eliminated, our district would [describe the impact—redirect local funds, delay upgrades, reduce services, etc.].

4. Address other FCC proposals that matter to you.

For example:

Our district supports appropriate safeguards for children’s use of technology. At the same time, decisions about when and how technology should be used for instruction should remain local educational decisions. Educators, school leaders, school boards, and families are better positioned than the FCC to determine how technology should be used to meet the needs of their students.

5. Make your recommendation.

We urge the FCC to preserve E-Rate’s core mission of ensuring that schools and libraries can obtain affordable, reliable, high-capacity connectivity and to avoid changes that would undermine schools’ ability to meet the evolving needs of students and educators.

Please personalize your comments. Individual district experiences and examples will make the FCC’s record stronger.

How to File Your Comments

Comments can be submitted electronically through the FCC’s [Electronic Comment Filing System \(ECFS\)](#).

Comments are due October 13, 2026.

The proceeding includes **WC Docket Nos. 26-133, 13-184, 21-93, and 21-455.**

Step One: Go to ECFS

Open the [FCC’s Electronic Comment Filing System](#) and select the option to submit a filing.

Step Two: Choose How to File

The FCC provides two easy options:

Standard Filing allows you to upload a prepared Word or PDF document.

Express Comment allows you to type or paste a short statement directly into ECFS.

Either option allows your district to participate.

Step Three: Complete the Required Information

Select the applicable E-Rate proceeding and complete the required filer information.

For an initial submission, select the applicable **Comment** filing type.

If using Standard Filing, upload your comment document.

Remember: FCC filings are public. Do not include confidential student information or other information that should not be publicly disclosed.

Step Four: Review and Submit

Before submitting:

- Confirm the correct proceeding;
- Proofread your comments;
- Confirm the correct document is attached, if applicable; and
- Review your filer information.

Then select **Submit Filing** and save your confirmation.

Your Experience Matters

The FCC is making decisions that could shape the future of E-Rate.

National statistics can show how many schools have broadband. School districts can explain what those statistics cannot: what it takes to maintain affordable, reliable connectivity; why needs continue to evolve; and what reducing E-Rate would mean for students and communities.

The FCC also needs to hear that protecting children and making sound decisions about technology are important—but that instructional decisions belong at the local level.

You do not need to answer every question in the proceeding.

Tell the FCC what you know. Use local examples. Explain why E-Rate still matters.