

FY2019 E-Rate State Match Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: 12/19/2018

- 1. Do we need a signed contract to submit with the state match application? We do not want to sign an official contract until we have approval from the state for the state match funds.**

The state match application does ask applicants to submit to us your choice of vendor and the scoring rubrics used to make the award determination. You will need to enter the amount of state match you are requesting on the grant application, which will be based on your selected vendor proposal and USAC C1 discount rate. Another critical point to consider is that the state match award is contingent upon USAC funding – the state match will not be awarded if an applicant is not awarded USAC funding. In order to apply for USAC funding, you will need to submit your signed contract with your funding request when filing your Form 471, which will be due sometime in early March (the exact 471 due date has not been set by USAC as of the FAQ date above).
- 2. I thought the application is due on January 25, 2019. Can you explain the December 21 date?**

The ISBE Grant Application is due by 4pm on Friday, January 25, 2019. Since this is a matching grant, applicants are in effect applying for **both** E-Rate **and** the state match grant. In order to comply with Federal E-Rate rules, districts must post an FCC Form 470 listing services desired and then [wait at least 28 days](#) before vendors/service providers can be chosen. ISBE is *recommending* December 21 as a date to file the 470 by as that is the last day before the Winter Break period in most Illinois School Districts. The absolute last day to file a FCC Form 470 and comply with the 28-day rule requirement of the E-Rate program is Friday, December 28. Remember that when you file your grant application with ISBE, you must also file a copy of your Form 470, information about your chosen vendor/service provider, and the evaluation rubric used to make your vendor/service choice as part of the grant application.
- 3. I would like to extend fiber to the press box on our football field. Would that be covered with this opportunity?**

E-Rate rules allow for Category 1 E-Rate discounts for non-instructional facilities. See USAC guidance at <https://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/beforeyoubegin/non-instructional-facilities.aspx>. For the state match grant, you should consider explaining how connectivity impacts students.
- 4. I heard something about an amortization issue with special construction projects that exceed \$500,000. Will this prevent me from applying for the grant?**

As part of the [Second E-Rate Modernization Order](#), adopted on December 11, 2014, the FCC suspended for four years its requirement that applicants amortize category one special construction charges in excess of \$500,000 over multiple years. This suspension has now expired. The [State of Illinois](#) as well as numerous other states and [educational technology advocacy groups](#) have petitioned the FCC to extend the suspension or eliminate the

requirement. As of the FAQ date above, no action has been taken by the FCC. It is currently unknown whether or not this amortization requirement is in effect for E-Rate funding requests for FY2019 as there has been no mention of it in USAC training materials or in any USAC weekly briefs to date.

While this will not prevent any districts from applying for the grant, applicants with projects that may exceed \$500,000 need to keep in mind that you may need to amortize upfront construction costs. The State Match funds are appropriated for the state's Fiscal Year 2019 and disbursements of these funds is not subject to the FCC or any other federal requirement as these are state funds. The State match is contingent upon USAC approval of Form 470 and 471 funding requests. Keep in mind that the state match will only pay the non-discounted portion of any special construction project, not the whole project cost.

5. Are there specific bandwidth requirements that need to be met?

Per the performance measure target on [page 6 of the RFP packet](#), it is expected that awardees will meet or exceed the FCC goal of at least 1 Gbps per 1,000 students/staff for internet access.

6. My schools are all connected via fiber, but I would like fiber connectivity to my district office. Would that be covered under this program?

Yes, it would be eligible for special construction under the [USAC guidance for non-instructional facilities \(NIF\)](#). However, you should consider explaining how connectivity impacts students in the State Match application. You should make it clear that the project enables additional opportunities for students.

7. If a district completed an upgrade last year that went through the E-Rate approval process but did not apply for the state match, can the district apply for state match reimbursement for the district paid portion this year?

No. ISBE cannot retroactively reimburse districts that did not apply for the state match during last year's opportunity.

8. Do you have any sample proposals as a resource?

Education SuperHighway has a number of sample RFP templates available at <https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/resources>

Mindy Fiscus from the Learning Technology Center will also be posting samples at <https://www.ltcillinois.org/access>

9. How detailed does the 470 need to be?

The 470 form should indicate the type of fiber connection you wish to install. It is recommended that details and specifics of your request be placed in a RFP document which would be uploaded as an attachment to your 470. Sample RFP templates are available from Education SuperHighway at <https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/resources>. Additionally, the [Learning Technology Center of Illinois](#) can also assist with 470 and RFP paperwork.

10. Does this opportunity include connections between buildings and to a provider?

Yes, if your project fits the definition of an E-rate fiber special construction project. See USAC's website at <https://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/beforeyoubegin/fiber.aspx> for more details.

11. What is the difference between leased lit fiber, self-provisioned fiber, and dark fiber?

USAC 2019 Training Slides do an excellent job of describing each type of fiber. Download the slides at <https://www.usac.org/res/documents/sl/training/2018/Applicant-Advanced-Eligible-Services.pptx> and view the slides starting with slide #10. Education SuperHighway also has a webpage explaining the differences at: <https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/upgrade/secure-funding/e-rate/category-1/>

12. Are costs for tower construction for wireless Point to point configurations covered under this grant?

No. Tower construction costs are not eligible for either E-Rate or state match funds.

13. Are there any other category 2 eligible services that will work with this grant other than fiber runs?

E-Rate Special Construction costs and the state match grant opportunity only cover Category 1 costs for fiber installations. No other Category 1 or Category 2 costs are covered.