

TO: AASA, AESA Members
DATE: August 2026
RE: FAQ for FCC Proposed Rule on E-Rate

This document is intended as a quick reference for the most commonly asked questions in relation to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) proposed rule around the E-Rate program. Additional information and resources—including our call to action, template for comments, and supporting data—can be found on our [Keep Schools Connected: Protect E-Rate](#) website.

Important to Note:

- The FCC is asking questions and proposing changes. It has not yet made final decisions about the future scope of E-Rate.
- Comments need to be filed no later than October 13, 2026.
- If you want AASA to file your comments for you, you need to email them to Noelle Elerson Ng (nellerson@aasa.org) no later than 5 pm ET on October 2, 2026.
- You can access step-by-step instructions for filing your comments directly through the FCC's [Electronic Comment Filing System](#) (ECFS) on the [SHLB website](#).
- The template for comments can be accessed on [Keep Schools Connected: Protect E-Rate](#). Scroll down to the red, and click the button!

Is E-Rate being eliminated? No. The FCC has not eliminated E-Rate. The FCC has opened a rulemaking that asks whether the program should be narrowed, reoriented, geographically limited, or potentially sunset. Those are questions under consideration, not a final decision.

Do the proposed changes take effect now? No. The June 2026 item is a proposed rulemaking. Existing E-Rate requirements continue to apply unless and until the FCC adopts and makes effective changes through the rulemaking process.

Is the FCC proposing to eliminate E-Rate funding for Pre-K and Head Start? The issue is more nuanced than that. Certain non-traditional elementary and secondary education entities—including eligible pre-kindergarten and Head Start facilities—currently can participate in E-Rate under specified circumstances. The FCC's proceeding raises questions about eligibility and the scope of the program, but it would be inaccurate to describe the June 2026 item simply as an adopted decision to eliminate Pre-K or Head Start eligibility.

Is the FCC changing CIPA right now? No. The FCC is asking whether its current interpretation of CIPA is the best reading of the statute and is considering possible changes. Existing CIPA obligations remain in place unless the FCC ultimately adopts changes.

Is the FCC imposing screen-time limits now? No. The NPRM asks questions about screen time and the use of E-Rate-funded networks. It does not establish a new screen-time rule at this stage.

Do I have to be an E-Rate expert to file comments? No. First-hand experience is valuable. A school district, library, educator, technology leader, or community organization can explain how E-Rate works in practice and what a change would mean locally.

Do I have to answer every question in the FCC document? No. Focus on the issues that matter to your organization. Specific, well-supported comments are more useful than trying to address every issue without meaningful evidence.

Can organizations submit joint comments? Yes. Organizations may coordinate their positions and submit comments together where they share common concerns. Individual organizations can also submit their own comments describing their specific circumstances.

What information should we collect?

At minimum, consider gathering:

- E-Rate funding received in recent years;
- Current E-Rate discount percentage;
- Eligible services supported;
- Annual cost of those services;
- Your non-discount share;
- Planned connectivity investments;
- Potential replacement costs; and
- Specific examples of how E-Rate-supported connectivity benefits your students, patrons, staff, and community.

Where can I read the FCC proposal? The FCC's official [FCC-26-41 NPRM/FNPRM](#) is the primary source for the proceeding.

Where do I file? Comments are filed through the FCC's [Electronic Comment Filing System](#) (ECFS). The proceeding is primarily associated with WC Docket No. 26-133, with related dockets 13-184, 21-93, and 21-455.

How do I file comments? You can file your comments directly through the [ECFS link](#) in the previous question. SHLB has an excellent [step-by-step guide](#) detailing the process. If you prefer, AASA can file your comments for you; you must submit them to Noelle Ellerson Ng (nellerson@aasa.org) no later than 5 pm ET on Friday, October 2, 2026.

What's the timeline for filing? The FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was published in the Federal Register on August 14, 2026. The sooner you submit your comments, the better. The deadline for submission is October 13, 2026. If you would like AASA to file your final comment for you, you need to email it directly to Noelle Ellerson Ng (nellerson@aasa.org) no later than 5 pm ET October 2, 2026.

Where can I learn more about how E-Rate works? USAC provides an overview of the E-Rate process, including eligibility, competitive bidding, applications, funding decisions, and invoicing. Learn More:

- [USAC: Get Started with E-Rate](#)
- [USAC: E-Rate Applicant Process](#)

Where can I learn more? Information for the NPRM can be found:

- AASA/AESA's [Keep Schools Connected: Protect E-Rate](#) website
- SHLB [Save Our E-Rate](#) website
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This document is intended as a general advocacy and educational resource and should not be treated as legal advice. Members should review the FCC's official documents and applicable filing instructions before submitting comments.