

## GPLS IT Broadband Summary Statement FY'18

### **Short Version:**

Due to unforeseen administrative and funding level changes on the federal level, we are responding by changing the Broadband support model. We will not, at this time, be moving to a consortial model of support.

We are increasing the level of E-Rate support offered, detailed below. Also detailed below are changes in our funding model for network support. While we do not anticipate immediate changes in the level of funding, we are adjusting our annual budget in anticipation of changes that may result from USAC and Federal Government changes in their respective budgets.

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### **More Details:**

In planning for the Broadband model, GPLS was informed of several changes that were likely to change our model of support. We reached out to and worked with E-Rate consultants, USAC management, ALA policy offices and E-Rate coordinators from other state libraries. Based on what we discovered, and due to unforeseen changes on the federal level – both administrative and fiscal – we are adjusting our Broadband support model.

### **Administrative changes forecasted:**

There is a great deal of uncertainty as to how E-Rate will be funded in future years (See further reading for more on this):

- Chairman Pai has already capped some other services that USAC administers. The E-Rate program may be facing similar caps or significant changes in how E-Rate monies are disbursed in the future.
- Pai has a history of voting against expanding the E-Rate program (he voted against Obama's E-Rate reforms in 2014)
- *Not knowing where this is going to go, libraries need to be flexible in their contracts; should funding sources change, libraries need contract terms that can change with funding sources.*

### **Fiscal changes forecasted:**

Earlier this year, the President proposed to eliminate the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in his FY2018 budget, effectively releasing all federal funding for libraries. While this did not come to pass this year, we are keenly aware that the proposal may yet, at least in part, be passed in coming years.

Since the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) is the primary source of funding for all technology-related services GPLS offers, we feel it necessary to plan future projects with the potential for these changes. We are building in plans - across all of our projects - to mitigate for changes in federal funding levels, including our Broadband support model.

**What does this mean for Georgia's libraries?**

- Moving to a model where GPLS serves as the E-Rate applicant and is the contract holder for Broadband access at this time isn't fiscally responsible and too great of a financial risk for Georgia's taxpayers. In other words, it's riskier to put all of our eggs in the state Broadband basket than it is to continue applying individually.
- Each Library system will procure their own contracts for Broadband services and remain the E-Rate applicant for their individual systems.
- *GPLS will continue to support and assist you with your E-Rate applications at a level of involvement you feel comfortable with-- along the spectrum from "occasional questions" all the way to "help me every step of the way."*
- GPLS will ask each director choosing to receive support to sign a Service Level Agreement which gives you more detail about what this support entails.

**What's staying the same?**

Libraries still are able to make their own choices about their ISP, speed, and services they provide to their patrons.

**Category 2 Funding:** Remember, you are still eligible to apply for Category 2 – internal connections, managed internal Broadband services, and basic maintenance of internal connections. (See further reading for more on this. It's worth it. There is SO much money.)

**What's different?**

**Funding:**

- *GPLS will continue to reimburse you for your CAT 1 non-discounted portion of eligible services but we will be capping that support.* In order to ensure that we are able to continue to support every system equitably with no state funding increases anticipated, we will implement a formula to allocate available funds for this purpose.
- We will be taking the average spend for each library over the last five years and adding a percentage to that annually and will then assign a cap based on that number.
- The trend over the last five years has been that the cost of Broadband has come down every year. That has helped us absorb the costs of increasing speeds. All forecasts say that trend will continue, and that will continue to help us reconcile the needed growth with budgetary restrictions.
- **Example:** Library X has averaged \$3,000/year post E-Rate discount over the course of five years. GPLS may increase that amount by 5% annually, increasing the post E-Rate coverage to \$3,150. So the cap for Library X would be \$3,150 for Year One.

**Support:**

- *GPLS will continue to support and assist you with your E-Rate applications at a level of involvement you feel comfortable with-- along the spectrum from "occasional questions" all the way to "help me every step of the way."*

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- USAC has granted GPLS a “Consultant Level” account within EPC and assigned a “Consultant Registration Number” (CRN) to GPLS’ EPC profile. Sue Plaksin is account administrator of this profile. *Through your EPC account, you may add Sue as a “partial rights” user to your account. This gives her access to work within your EPC portal where **she will be able to provide a very detailed level of support during your application preparation.***

#### FURTHER READING

##### **Administrative changes forecasted:**

The way E-Rate is administered may change: FCC Chairman Ajit Pai has not been shy about his disappointment with USAC and its administering of E-Rate funds to schools and libraries in general, and his frustrations with the EPC program in particular. See Pai's [letter](#) dated April 18, 2017 to then USAC CEO, Chris Henderson. (Henderson resigned shortly after this letter was issued and USAC has yet to replace its CEO--as of this writing, September 19, 2017).

In addition, on August 21, 2017, [USAC reported that in consultation with the FCC](#), they are in the process of "formulating a plan to transfer the funds of the Universal Service Fund (USF) to the U.S. Department of Treasury, in order to reduce the financial risks and to have additional fiscal controls over the USF program." This means that the money is now subject to legislative review and can be included or excluded from the federal budget.

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##### **Category 2 Funding:**

- All libraries are eligible for a pre-discount budget of up to **\$2.30 per square foot** over five years.
- If you qualify as a City, Large City, Mid-Size or Suburban library, you are eligible for up to **\$5.00 per square foot**. (Sue can help you figure out your IMLS code if you don't know it off the top of your head.)
- There is also a **funding floor of up to \$9,200** – that way if your library is tiny, you are still eligible for receiving enough to get work done.
- We have a spreadsheet at GPLS within which we have calculated all that you are eligible to receive. Let us know if you'd like any help in figuring out what you can do with these funds!

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##### **Support:**

- GPLS is changing the focus of support to help with procurement of CAT 1 and CAT 2 services and equipment, document retention, and support during the audit process should that become necessary.
- Now that Sue has a USAC has a "Consultant Registration Number" (CRN) *you may add Sue as a "partial rights" user to your account. This gives her access to work within your EPC portal where she will be able to provide a very detailed level of support during your application preparation. To the extent you feel comfortable, she can track, monitor and help move along your applications every step of the way.*
- Workshops will be different:
  - **Fall training will focus on procurement procedures:**
    - Tips for developing a robust RFP

- Help with Form 470 Preparation
  - Developing a pro-customer ISP service contract including specific contract terms and conditions worded to protect you
- **Spring training will focus on post application forms, document retention, and audits**
  - Pros & Cons of SPI v. BEAR invoicing
  - Your document retention checklist and why it is important
  - Form 486 & CIPA compliance
  - Looking ahead: What will you do with your CAT 2?
- Increased Level of Support:
  - **Dedicated webpages to help you navigate through this new plan, including but not limited to:**
    - Training & Workshop schedule
    - Service Level Agreement
    - Document Retention list
    - Boilerplates & Templates & Guides
      - RFP for CAT 1
      - Contract Terms & Conditions
      - Step-by-step guides for FCC Forms

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### **What Have We Done? / What Can We Do?**

We've been involved on several levels for the last five years, telling the library story and demonstrating the need for this critical funding:

#### What We've Done So Far:

- Currently serving on the ALA/OITP (American Library Association/Office for Information Technology Policy) E-Rate Task Force.
- 2017. Recently, both the House and Senate held committee hearings at which we priority issues for libraries— most notably net neutrality and potential changes in the E-rate program – were prominently discussed. GPLS contributed notes in anticipation of the meeting. More on these strategic committee meetings on the [ALA District Dispatch blog](#).
- 2013-2016. Served on the ALA/OITP (American Library Association/Office for Information Technology Policy) telecom sub-committee.
- 2015-2016. Served on the Advisory Board of the ALA-COSLA (Chief Officers of State Library Agencies) Library E-Rate Assessment and Planning Project (LEAP).
- 2015. FCC (Federal Communications Commission) E-Rate Funded Fiber Build Projects Workshop

- 2015. Panelist at SHLB (Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband Coalition). "Better Together: Aggregating Demand and Building Consortia for Broadband Services."
- 2015. Panelist, Gigabit Cities Live. "Business Models & Strategic Considerations: Creating a Realistic Gigabit Network Business Plan."
- 2014. Contributor to the COSLA (Chief Officers of State Library Agencies) Planning Guide for Library Broadband Connectivity.
- 2014. Panelist, PAT-C (Public Access Technology Community) webinar, "Planning Guide for Library Broadband Connectivity."
- 2014. Presented webinar, "Net Neutrality: Recent Changes in Legislation," for the GLA Carterette Series.
- 2014. Panelist on the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) E-Rate Modernization Workshop, representing the interests of all libraries in federal funding changes and growth.
- 2014. Panelist at the Schools, Health and Libraries in Broadband conference. "How to obtain the most "bang for the buck" in the E-Rate program in order to provide the greatest amount of bandwidth for libraries at the least cost."
- 2013. Blog post on Georgia's Network Project on District Dispatch – News for Friends of Libraries from the ALA Washington Office.

#### What More Can We Do?

**May 7-8, 2018** – National Library Legislative Day (NLLD) - a two-day advocacy event that brings hundreds of librarians, trustees, library supporters and patrons to Washington, D.C. to meet with their members of Congress and to rally support for library issues and policies.

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**Georgia Library Day @ the Capitol** – Attend & Advocate. Tell your legislators that Broadband is a foundational service provided by libraries for their communities and that the funding provided by the FCC E-Rate program is make or break. Every state, including Georgia, depends almost completely on this federal funding in order to bridge the digital divide for their communities.

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Keep an eye on our new [E-Rate and Broadband News Ticker](#) on galibtech.org. We will be compiling stories, developments, etc. that we think are relevant to E-Rate and Broadband (and Net Neutrality when relevant) changes on the federal and state levels.

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Subscribe to the [Benton Foundation blog – Benton.org](#) – they aggregate related news stories on a daily basis. From their site, their goals are:

- articulating and promoting a public interest vision and communications policy alternatives for the digital age,
- raising awareness among funders and nonprofits of their stake in the critical policy issues of the digital age, and
- enabling communities and nonprofits to produce diverse, decentralized and locally responsive content.

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Follow the [ALA-OITP for opportunities for advocacy](#):

- [District Dispatch](#), the ALA Washington Office blog

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