

***This memorial resolution was adopted by the ALA Council on
Tuesday, February 13, 2018***

A Tribute Resolution Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of E-Rate

Whereas, libraries perform a significant role for communities across the United States in providing equitable access to information, closing the digital divide, and fostering educational, career and lifelong opportunities;

Whereas, high-speed Internet connections and robust Wi-Fi are essential for all libraries and underpin services on which our libraries and their communities across the country depend;

Whereas, students and lifelong learners require access to broadband services for education and distance learning and to develop information and technological literacy for success in school and the 21st century workforce;

Whereas, the E-rate program, created by Congress under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, has been instrumental in connecting America's public libraries to broadband since its implementation in 1998;

Whereas, the American Library Association has a long-standing commitment to universal and affordable access to advanced telecommunications services through the support of Universal Service and E-rate since its implementation in 1998;

Whereas, the 2014 E-rate Modernization Order opened new opportunities for rural and remote libraries that are furthest behind the FCC's broadband goals for libraries to gain access to high-speed fiber connections by increasing options to secure those connections and adopting rules to increase competition among broadband and internet service providers; and

Whereas, the 2014 E-rate Modernization Order increased available funding to \$3.9 billion thus ensuring libraries have adequate funding for Wi-Fi access throughout their buildings; and

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Whereas, ALA Policy B.4.2 (Free access to information) states that “The American Library Association shall seek to make it possible for library and information service agencies which receive their major support from public funds to provide service to all people without additional fees and to utilize the latest technological developments to insure the best possible access to information, and ALA will actively promote its position on equal access to information” now, therefore, be it:

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. recognizes and applauds the contributions toward universal service and internet access facilitated by the success of E-rate;
2. commends the FCC for its work to modernize the E-rate program and ensure it keeps pace with the growing demands of technology, including the overall funding increase from \$2.4 billion to \$3.9 billion annually;
3. calls on the FCC and Congress to commit to continued stewardship of the E-rate program, work to ensure full participation in E-rate for libraries, work towards improving access and participation for libraries, and ensure it continues to meet the evolving telecommunications needs of libraries and that gains made through the Modernization are sustained; and
4. that the American Library Association through the work of the E-rate Task Force and in collaboration with the Committee on Legislation, continues to monitor the actions of the FCC, participates in E-rate proceedings, works with the Universal Service Administrative Company that manages the E-rate program to improve program processes, and seeks champions in Congress to ensure the longevity of a strong E-rate program.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Tuesday, February 13, 2018, in Denver, Colorado



Mary W. Ghikas
Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council