# ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation

August 13, 2015

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC  20554

**In the Matter of:**     **Nomination for Universal Service Administrative Company Board of Directors, CC Docket Nos. 97-21 and 96-45.**

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

The American Library Association (ALA) respectfully nominates Robert Bocher for appointment to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Board of Directors to fill the library position.

The next few years are critical for the E-rate program and for the library applicant community as the changes wrought during the modernization proceeding are implemented. We know libraries need a strong, deeply knowledgeable, and respected voice on the USAC Board and we are confident that Mr. Bocher's work with the E-rate program since its inception provides this voice. His expertise with network design and management and his deep commitment to library issues will help ensure libraries are able to take advantage of the new E-rate opportunities to increase broadband capacity. Mr. Bocher's expertise will also help ensure USAC has the knowledge base necessary to successfully implement the new rules efficiently and effectively so that the Commission's program goals can be met.

Mr. Bocher began his long tenure advocating for library technology and broadband capacity issues in the early days of the E-rate program serving as the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's (WDPI) state-wide E-rate support manager. During that time he also was an original member of ALA's E-rate task force. Mr. Bocher currently serves as a technology Fellow for ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy and serves on its telecommunications committee as well as still serving on the E-rate task force. From the very beginning Mr. Bocher combined a unique skill set of understanding the applicant experience with the E-rate program while maintaining the pulse of the relationship between policy development and the implementation of Commission rules, developing understanding of the policy and politics at the national level.

Mr. Bocher brings additional expertise related to broadband network design and management through his work with Wisconsin's research and education network, WiscNet, which provides internet access to the majority of the state's libraries and K12 schools and BadgerNet the state's broadband network. Mr. Bocher also assisted the state's 17 regional library consortia to develop
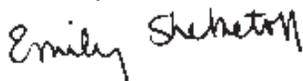
WANs and shared integrated library systems.  Mr. Bocher is remarkably well-versed on broadband deployment issues as is exemplified through his contribution to Wisconsin's $27 million BTOP project (which was funded by NTIA though declined by the state) and a subsequent state-initiated project in 2014 to bring fiber to 362 public libraries in the state. Through this project over 90% of the libraries now have a fiber connection. This experience is critical to address the connectivity needs in the majority of the nation's libraries and we are confident Mr. Bocher's experience in this area will make a tremendous difference for all libraries seeking to employ the new E-rate opportunities.

Mr. Bocher's diverse experience makes him a strong contributor to the management and oversight of USAC's administration of the E-rate program specifically and of the Universal Service Fund (USF) generally. During his tenure at WDPI, Mr. Bocher managed over $40 million in grants from the Library Services and Technology Act funding and he managed five state-wide grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Today this knowledge base is ever more essential as USAC is in the midst of establishing a performance management system as directed by the Commission in the Second E-rate Modernization Order. Oversight by the Board will include improving the applicant experience as well as creating a forward facing strategic plan to sustain performance improvements for USAC as the administrator of the USF. Mr. Bocher is amply prepared to provide a strong hand in a collaborative sprit to help USAC accomplish its near term goals while helping to shape a longer vision as the Commission continues to address complicated issues that impact USF programs and the respective constituents.

Finally, Mr. Bocher is well respected and known within the U.S. library community on E-rate and telecommunications matters. In addition to his professional work and committee work on these subjects, he has spoken publicly on these issues many times, such as at ALA conferences, SHLB conferences, and has also represented libraries at the FCC. ALA is confident that Mr. Bocher will provide the necessary leadership on the USAC Board of Directors—one of the most important policy bodies for libraries. The E-rate program is a fundamental enabler for libraries to provide their essential services in employment, entrepreneurship, education, empowerment, and engagement—*The E's of Libraries™*.

A copy of Mr. Bocher's professional biography is attached.  Thank you for your consideration.


Sincerely,

Emily Sheketoff
Executive Director
American Library Association
Washington Office

Marijke Visser
Associate Director,
Office for Information Technology Policy
American Library Association
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# Robert F. Bocher

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## Summary of Qualifications

- Over thirty-five years of program administration and project management experience focused on library and school technology—including Internet access and broadband connectivity.
- Serve as the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's statewide E-rate support manager since the E-rate's inception. This includes providing support to 424 school districts and 386 public libraries. Author the department's comments to the Federal Communications Commission on the E-rate program.
- Current member and former chair of the American Library Association's E-rate Task Force. Consult with ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) on E-rate issues.
- Member of the State E-rate Coordinators Alliance (SECA).
- Co-authored a $27 million BTOP grant to bring fiber connectivity to 387 Wisconsin libraries and schools. (While the grant was awarded the State of Wisconsin ultimately declined it.)
- Served on the WiscNet board, 2000 – 2012. (WiscNet is the state's Research and Education Network. Over eighty percent of Wisconsin's K-12 schools and ninety percent of its public libraries get Internet access via WiscNet.)
- Serve on the state's BadgerNet Advisory Council. (BadgerNet is the state's broadband network providing connectivity to over 920 libraries and schools.)
- Serve on the state Public Service Commission's Broadband Advisory Group.
- Managed a project in 2014 to bring fiber to 362 public libraries in the state. (Over ninety percent of libraries now have fiber.)
- Recipient of the Department of Public Instruction's Outstanding Employee Achievement Award and the Wisconsin Library Association's Special Service Award.

## Work Experience

- 1975 – 1980: Library Assistant. Wisconsin Supreme Court Law Library. Madison, WI.
- 1980 – 1990: Manager of WISCAT, the statewide library catalog of over 2 million titles from 435 libraries. Wisconsin Reference and Loan Library. Madison, WI.
- 1990 – 2012: Technology Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, State Library Division.
- 2009 – Present: Fellow at the American Library Association's Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP). Primarily consult on E-rate and broadband issues.
- 2012 – Present: Consult for the Department of Public Instruction providing statewide E-rate and broadband support to public libraries and K-12 schools.

## Education

- BA Secondary Education and History, University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh.
- MA Library and Information Science, University of Wisconsin – Madison