

# ALA American Library Association

December 5, 2013

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket No. 13-184

Dear Secretary Dortch:

On December 2, 2013, Marijke Visser, Assistant Director, American Library Association Office for Information Technology Policy (ALA); Larra Clark, Director, ALA Program on Networks; and Alan Fishel, Partner, Arent Fox LLP; met with Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel and Christi Barnhardt, Acting Wireline Legal Advisor, to discuss ALA's reply comments filed in the Modernizing the E-rate Program for Schools and Libraries proceeding.

During the meeting ALA discussed how libraries are the other critical link in supporting the educational needs of K-12 and non-traditional students and learners. Earlier this year, for instance, the Pew Internet Project found that 70 percent of parents reported their child visited a public library in the past 12 months. Of these, a significant majority of children (particularly those 12-17 years old) went to the library to do school work. Libraries play an important role in not only supporting school curriculum, but also enabling student-driven learning and digital collaboration. Libraries support a "whole child" approach to education that includes the relationship between the parent/guardian, the teacher, and the school administration as school communications are routinely done online. Parents may use library technology to access school management systems for tracking student achievement.

To ensure libraries are able to continue meeting these community demands, we need high-capacity connections and a robust, future-focused E-rate program. ALA supports a two-prong approach to address this need. First, immediate infusion of funding to the E-rate program for build-out in areas where high-capacity broadband is not available to libraries and schools. This temporary program, "ConnectUS," builds on the President's ConnectED initiative. Second, ALA proposes a pilot program, "FINAL," targeted to libraries where capacity is available but where costs inhibit them from taking advantage of higher speeds.

ALA also reiterated its support for both increasing permanent funding to meet increased demand for broadband-enabled services in libraries, as well as efforts to maximize cost-effectiveness of using E-rate funds and streamlining administration of the program. We also discussed the need for additional funding support for rural libraries, potential changes in the prioritization of eligible

services and the need for thoughtful phase-out of any legacy services, and support for encouraging consortium applications and multiyear contracts.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

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