

“What is e-Rate?”

(OPENING MUSIC)

Dan Farslow:

E-Rate Program (SP) is a federal program that provides discounts to all eligible schools and libraries which are basically all schools and libraries, for telecommunication services, internet access services and internal connections equipment, that would be network build, wiring, hardware and what the program does is provide from 20 to 90 percent discount depending on the wealth level of the school. We average about 70 million dollars a year in Ohio discounts to Ohio schools and libraries I should say. The average discount rate for Ohio is just over 50 percent. The goal there is to allow all schools no matter their level of wealth or urban, rural status access to advanced technologies at reasonable rates. The SLD website Universalservice.org/sl contains the entire E-Rate Program, but more importantly E-TECH Ohio, it's my rule to ensure that information is provided to Ohio applicants. We go onsite in all corners of the state doing E-Rate workshops. The workshops provide deadlines, we provide all sorts of assistance and we explain any changes in the program every single year. Applicants must apply each year for this fund and it's a federal program so they're... they're complicated applications and multiple forms are required for participation. All of the forms are on line that is one of the major benefits to the applicant of this process. Once the application is filed the applicant simply waits. Historically that can be a frustrating time. As coordinator I often get calls saying, it's been three months and I filed and everything's complete, nobody's talked to me, what should I do? My response is always be patient, they'll get to you. Probably the most important thing to be aware of in the E-Rate program is that it is an annual sequence of

applications, it doesn't end and more so that the funding years overlap. If an applicant can keep their application forms in cycle, in sequence they'll be successful because the best news about this program is the money's available. Since the program began Ohio has received almost 600 million dollars in E-Rate discounts. I believe it's the single most valuable source of technology support to schools and libraries in the state of Ohio.

(CLOSING MUSIC)