

**Ohio Library Council
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ITEM NO.: **5.C**

MEETING DATE: **July 19, 2024**

SUBJECT: **OPLIN Report**

SUBMITTED BY: **Don Yarman**

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Category 2 E-rate Funds: “Use It or Lose It”

This is the last year to apply for E-rate Category 2 funds for your library in this budget cycle. Unlike “regular” E-rate which pays for on-going services related to internet access, Category 2 funds are internal wiring and equipment, such as routers, switches, and wireless access points; Category 2 also covers consulting fees for installation and configuration. We’re building out a portal to help libraries take advantage of the funds; check out <https://oplin.ohio.gov/category2>, and watch the OPLIN lists for an announcement of a short video guide to get you started.

E-rate Cybersecurity Pilot

E-rate rather notoriously does not fund cybersecurity services and tools, but the FCC has approved a three-year pilot to explore a policy change. Eligible services include advanced/next-generation firewalls, endpoint protection, identity management, and threat monitoring/detection/response. See <https://www.fcc.gov/cybersecurity-pilot-program> for more details. (OPLIN will be applying, but we’re encouraging libraries to also apply; the FCC needs to see how in-demand this funding is.)

Managed Branch Connections

Our first set of OPLIN-provided branch circuits are live, and nothing in the pilot program so far looks like a problem. This summer, we’ll be inviting libraries whose branch connections expire before January 2026 to consider paying OPLIN to order and support branch connectivity for them. The cost will be about \$155 per month per branch for a 1 Gbps circuit, billed annually. Watch the OPLIN lists for an announcement later this summer.

Website Accessibility Requirements

For years, the Department of Justice has said that library websites and apps should be compliant with the ADA, but they didn’t say how. The courts settled on “WCAG 2.1 Level AA” and things rolled on from there. Now, the DOJ has made the court standard [official](#).

The compliance deadline is way out in the future (April 2026 for large libraries, 2027 for the rest). We’ll have more advice for compliance later this year, but meanwhile our advice is *do not fall for companies trying to sell you a website overlay*.