Ohio Library Council
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ITEM NO.: **5.E**   MEETING DATE: **Sept. 20, 2024**

SUBJECT: **OPLIN Report**   SUBMITTED BY: **Don Yarman**

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

E-Rate Updates

The FCC has ordered that the hotspots that libraries lend are eligible for E-Rate discounts. The FCC established a formula for determining each library's hotspot budget for the next three years. They also established per-device and per-service price caps. (So like everything E-Rate related, it's complicated.) All of this will be covered in this fall's E-Rate workshops, but if you'd like to explore it sooner, I recommend the recording of SHLB's webinar from August 28, E-Rate Hotspot Lending - Answering Your Questions. To try to help libraries save some steps, OPLIN is planning on doing a statewide 470 for hotspot plans. Libraries would then be free to select the bids that best meet their local circumstances, and file for E-Rate reimbursements locally.

Every five years, each library is allocated money for "Category 2" expenses (internal wiring, equipment, etc.). The fifth year is coming up, so use it or lose it.
oplin.ohio.gov/category2plan

The fall E-Rate training schedule has been set. We've divided it up for separate training for newbies and E-Rate veterans, plus separate training sessions for Category 1 (like hotspots and branch connections) vs Category 2 (internal equipment). Dates and registration info are at oplin.ohio.gov/erateinfo.

Managed Branch Connections

Don't want to do E-Rate at all? Consider OPLIN's new Managed Branch Connection service. For $2,000 a year, OPLIN will provide libraries with service to a branch location comparable to the service already provided to the main/central library, and remove the chores of paying monthly bills and applying for E-Rate. The Managed Branch Connection service lets us leverage our large customer relationship with providers to get best pricing and priority support. A major benefit of our service is that it saves libraries the trouble of having to wrangle E-Rate processes *during construction*: we can start services on a library's construction schedule rather than having to wait until the next E-Rate service year or risk paying for undiscounted service. More info at https://oplin.ohio.gov/mbc.