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FCC Adopts $200M Cybersecurity Pilot Program for Schools and Libraries

On June 6, 2024, the FCC Adopted a three-year, $200M Cybersecurity Pilot Program for Schools and Libraries. The program explores how Universal Services Fund Support could help protect Schools and Libraries from Cyber Threats. The Pilot Program will follow many of the processes used in the E-Rate program, including competitive bidding, requests for eligible service and equipment, and a reimbursement process.

VIEW THE PILOT OVERVIEW HERE
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Summary of the Order and Rulemaking

A three year, $200M Cybersecurity pilot available to eligible applicants, including: schools, libraries, and consortia. Applicants currently participating in the E-Rate program will be eligible to apply for consideration. Applicants who don't currently participate in the E-Rate program are also eligible to apply to participate in the Cybersecurity Pilot Program. The FCC will open the application filing window this fall for entities interested.

Eligible Services and Equipment Categories

- Advance and Next-Generation Firewalls
- Endpoint Protection
- Identity Protection and Authentication
- Monitoring, Detection, and Response

Funding Budget

- Schools and school districts with 1,101 students will be eligible to receive up to $13.60 per student annually on a pre-discount basis.
- Schools with less than 1,100 students in a school or district receive the budget floor of $15,000 in support.
- FCC also established a maximum annual budget of $1.5 million, pre-discount. Schools and school districts with more than 110,000 students will be subject to this maximum over the three-year Pilot duration.
- Library applications will receive a budget floor of $15,00 per library location.

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Application Process

The FCC has divided its participation application (FCC Form 484) into two parts:

- Collect a more general level of cybersecurity information about the applicant and its proposed Pilot project.
- If selected to participate: The FCC will collect more detailed information about the applicant's current cybersecurity posture, training, policies, and history of cyber threats.

Process if Selected for the Pilot Program

- Submit Cybersecurity Pilot Form 470 to bid on eligible equipment/services competitively. Wait at least 28 days before conducting a bid evaluation.
- Sign vendor contract.
- Submit Cybersecurity Pilot Form 471.
- USAC will issue a Funding Commitment Decision Letter.
- Appeals must be submitted to USAC within 30 days, with a 30-day FCC appeal option (shorter than the E-Rate appeal deadline).
- Applicant/Service Provider submits BEAR or SPI reimbursement to USAC within 90 days of the last date to receive equipment/service (this is shorter than the E-Rate reimbursement deadline). A 90-day extension can be requested.
- Applicant submits annual progress reports and a final report after the Pilot Program.

Audits

Pilot Participants will be subject to audits and other investigations to evaluate their compliance with the pilot's statutory and regulatory requirements, including those pertaining to what services and equipment are purchased, what services and equipment are delivered, and how services and equipment are being used.

For more information or if you want to apply for the Cybersecurity Pilot Program,
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