



NEWS RELEASE

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Okaloosa County School District Secures E-rate Funding with *E-rate Manager for Applicants*

Online Suite of Tools Offers Districts an Easier, More Efficient Way to Obtain E-rate Funding

EDMOND, OKLA. (Jan. 22, 2009) – This year Okaloosa County School District received more than \$500,000 in funding for vital telecommunications services through the E-rate program. Randy Shipman, Coordinator of Systems for Okaloosa County School District, secured this technology funding for the district with assistance from *E-rate Manager for Applicants*, an online suite of tools developed by Funds For Learning, LLC.

“The E-rate program is a key funding source for my district. From the student perspective, it levels the playing field by providing funding for technology and equipment that some of the more affluent districts have access to,” said Shipman. “I love being responsible for E-rate, because it gives me the capability to generate additional funding for students in my district.”

As districts such as Okaloosa County School District increase their deployment of educational technology in the classroom, the cost of building and maintaining the required infrastructure to support this technology continues to rise. More than 30,000 schools and libraries apply for E-rate funding discounts every year, with about 90 percent receiving the assistance they need to provide telecommunications services and Internet access.

“Managing E-rate is a full-time job. The application process is complex and extremely time-consuming, and like many government programs, the rules change often and it’s hard to keep on top of them,” said Shipman. “Three years ago we purchased a district license to *E-rate Manager for Applicants*, which has provided me with the tools and resources to make my job easier.”

Okaloosa County School District turns to *E-rate Manager for Applicants* for assistance with its E-rate funding requests and commitments. The online suite of tools enables the district to stay current with fluctuating deadlines and paperwork, and navigate the process of preparing and filing the required forms. *E rate Manager for Applicants* features form wizards that ask simple, straightforward questions to help guide applicants in preparing Form 470 and Form 471.

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“One of the ways I use *E-rate Manager for Applicants* is to track disbursements,” said Shipman. “Before *E-rate Manager for Applicants*, I maintained a spreadsheet to monitor this, and it was a mess. Now I can see actual reporting of invoices from the Universal Service Administrative Company, and I don’t have to rely on my own figures, which is an incredible peace of mind.”

E-rate Manager for Applicants detects when money is authorized for disbursement, so the district is informed before the Universal Service Administrative Company sends a notification letter. This enables Okaloosa County School District to take immediate advantage of their E-rate funding. *E-rate Manager for Applicants* also shows line-by-line the dates and amounts of any changes to a funding commitment.

“With as many hats as I wear, it would be hard for me to track things as closely as required for the E-rate program without *E-rate Manager for Applicants*,” said Shipman. “I love the fact that everything I do is recorded, and I can go back to any funding year and verify information.”

Districts are required to retain all E-rate related documents for five years from the last date they received service on an approved funding commitment. *E-rate Manager for Applicants* offers the Okaloosa County School District up to 1,000 megabytes of online storage so that the district can keep important E-rate documents in one centralized location. This can be extremely helpful when responding to questions from program administrators or auditors.

E-rate Manager for Applicants is available as an annual subscription-per-user fee based on student population. The price of a year’s subscription starts at \$249.

For more information about Funds For Learning, visit www.FundsForLearning.com or phone 405-341-4140.

About Funds For Learning

Funds For Learning, LLC, is an E-rate compliance firm specializing in guiding E-rate applicants and service providers through the complex and ever-changing E-rate regulatory process. With more than 10 years of experience in providing professional advice and assistance relating to the E-rate program, Funds For Learning exists to provide high-quality solutions for the needs of E-rate stakeholders. The company was established in 1997 and is headquartered in Edmond, Okla. For more information, visit www.FundsForLearning.com or phone 405-341-4140.

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